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PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

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PlayStation®2





ANGEL OF DARKNESS

LARA CROFT
**TOMB
RAIDER**
the angel of darkness

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

core
design

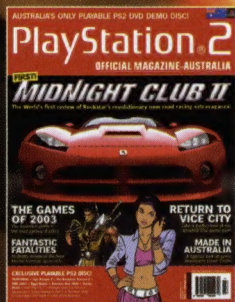


PlayStation®2

PC CD-ROM

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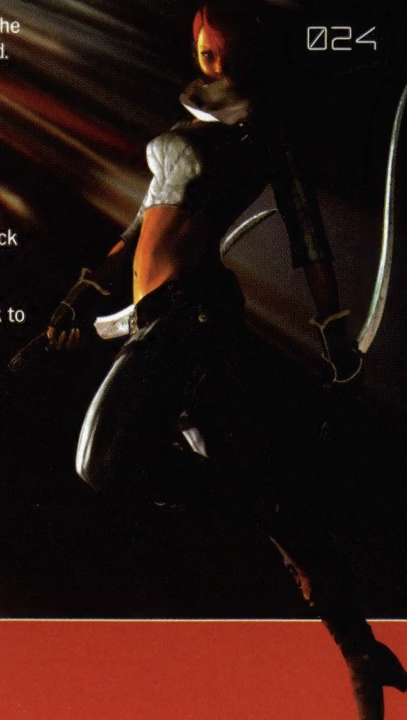
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RICHIE'S TOP 2

MIDNIGHT CLUB 2

(TAKE 2) FEBRUARY

I've been lucky enough to have played this game way before release. The best thing now is getting this gem up and running on-line. Anyone up for a challenge? I'm willing to put my Holden on the line...

VIRTUA TENNIS 2

(SEGA/ACCLAIM) OUT NOW

By far the most impressive tennis sim to date. We still wish the Scud was still in it. Or better still, some of the older crowd like Becker, Edberg, Lendl, Connors, Wilander, hell... even Cash! And why's Rafter's legs so fat? Wicked, either way!



JASON'S TOP 2

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

(MIDWAY) FEBRUARY

Wow, actual game play! Whoever thought there'd be a MK game worth taking seriously? I can hardly wait to decapitate my flat mate...

BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

(INFOGRAMES) OUT NOW

Never have I had so much fun squishing little soldiers and hammering smaller units. It's like being in the MegaDoomer from Invader Zim, minus the chicken legs. All their base are belong to me! Aghhhhh... ha ha ha!

So much to destroy, so little time!



"If you thought last year was a cracker for big releases, then 2003 will blow even those standards out of the water."

EDITOR'S LETTER



Burning the midnight oil has been a regular occurrence in OPS2 Towers lately. We're trying hard to keep up with the massive catalogue of PS2 bound AAA games around the world to make sure you know what's what when it comes to the best games money can buy.

For starters, we've secured the first *Midnight Club 2* review that you'll see anywhere in the world. This is a superb on-line racer that provides unprecedented levels of freedom and replayability. It's definitely one of the hottest racers that will be released this year, so we urge all race fans to check this one out.

If you thought last year was a cracker for big releases, then 2003 will blow even those standards out of the water. We're expecting this year to be the most formative of all for the PS2 and we've compiled a calendar of the year's biggest releases for your pleasure (and planning!) starting on page 42. Apart from all the awesome games listed here, we know for a fact of some other nifty surprises in-the-works that will make major waves this year.

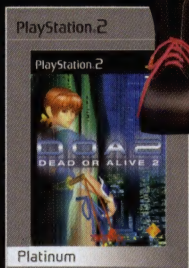
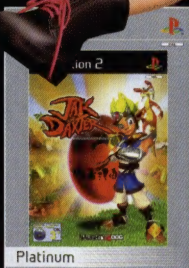
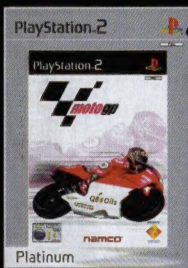
This issue, we've also checked out the Australian Game Developers Conference. Like the PS2 itself, the state of the local development industry has improved year on year and it's exciting to see that some homegrown PS2 games are steaming ahead.

Vice City fans will also love our follow-up feature on the most impressive game of 2002. We've spent too many working hours in *Vice City* so we thought we better put something together to prove it. We're sure you'll find our "25 most defining moments" both hilarious and relevant to your own experiences in *Vice City*.

Happy gaming.

Richie Young

RICHIE YOUNG
Editor



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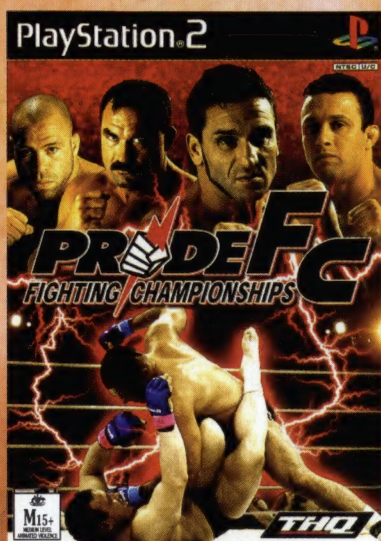
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As a special treat, *Official PlayStation Magazine* in conjunction with Sony Computer Entertainment Australia are offering an offer just too good to refuse! Get this - everyone who registers before the closing date will get one of these great games above! Turn to page 34 for all the details! *Offer applies to Australian residents only



THE GLOVES IN PRIDE FC ARE SMALLER
SO YOU CAN ACTUALLY FEEL AN OPPONENT'S
JAW SHATTER.



THE TOUGHEST FIGHTERS ON THE PLANET ARRIVE MARCH 2003

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PlayStation®2





ON THE DVD

PLAYABLE DEMOS

OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH, OPS2 LETS YOU PLAY...



If the news that the top country in FIFA's Oceania division now automatically qualifies for the World Cup finals has piqued your interest in soccer, or you simply want to know which of the current batch of football sims is right for you, this month's demo disc is an essential part of your PS2 diet. Both Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* and EA's *FIFA 2003* are featured as playable demos this month. Which footy game deserves your unwavering support? You'll soon find out for yourself. Regular readers will know that we tend to favour *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* around these parts, but *FIFA 2003* has really raised its game this year. Let us know what you think about the battle between the big two.

Also on the DVD is a chance to mutter gruff Italian-Americanisms while cracking skulls in *Rocky*; an opportunity to rewrite recent F1 history in *Formula One 2002*; and an invitation to tame a troupe of marauding monkeys in *Ape Escape 2*. Who could resist?

Richie Young

RICHIE YOUNG
Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2, then scroll between games and rolling demos with the \downarrow and \uparrow keys. To choose within a section use \leftarrow and \rightarrow . Press \otimes to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.



PLAY AS EITHER Real Madrid or Arsenal in our special single-half demo of the all-conquering football game. Those used to slightly shonky frame rates, lumbering controls and jerky animations are in for a revelation with this *FIFA* instalment, the first to truly combine the playability of rival *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* with the looks and licensing EA are famous for. As to which is truly the best, however, we'll let you decide – our *PES2* demo is also on this DVD.

After enjoying the teams walking onto the pitch, decide which team you want to play for by pressing \leftarrow or \rightarrow to make your choice, then \triangle to continue. Press \otimes to 'Resume Match' and kick off.

Each player's energy bar appears at the bottom of the screen and this changes to a strength meter when shooting. The rest is pure unadulterated football. Game on.

PlayStation 2
PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
GAME TYPE: SOCCER SIM
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2 (FULL GAME 1-8)



■ LIFE'S A PITCH Well, it is using these perspectives.



THE CONTROLS

Offensive:

- L-stick Movement
- R-stick Freestyle control
- \otimes Pass
- \odot Lob pass
- \triangle Through ball
- \square Shoot
- \square Run
- \square Initiate player run

Defensive:

- L-stick Movement
- R-stick Freestyle control
- \otimes Change man
- \odot Sliding tackle
- \triangle Header
- \square Conservative tackle
- \square Goalie rush



challenge

We're looking for a 4-0 victory for Arsenal. With you playing for Arsenal, obviously, it'll take some doing in the single half on offer but it is possible.

tip

Mix up your running pace, try tapping and holding \square for sudden bursts of speed and slow-downs guaranteed to wrong-foot a defender. Also, twiddle that right stick to perform traps, tap-ons and step-overs to keep defenders guessing.





PRO EVOLUTION™ SOCCER 2

WELCOME TO FIFA'S biggest rival. Which pitch will you prefer? It's time to find out.

Press **X** to choose Match mode, then again to choose a Friendly Match. There are four teams available to choose from (they're indicated by the illuminated flags). Once you've chosen your teams, select your strips, then press **X**. You can also choose where to play via a choice of two Stadia. Finally, before starting the game, you can go to the difficulty and choose how hard you want the CPU-controlled team to be. They've thought of everything.

And the options just keep on coming... You can now either just begin your match or tweak cameras, your team's formation or configure the controls just how you want them. Phew. A final 'Start the Match' will get the action under way.

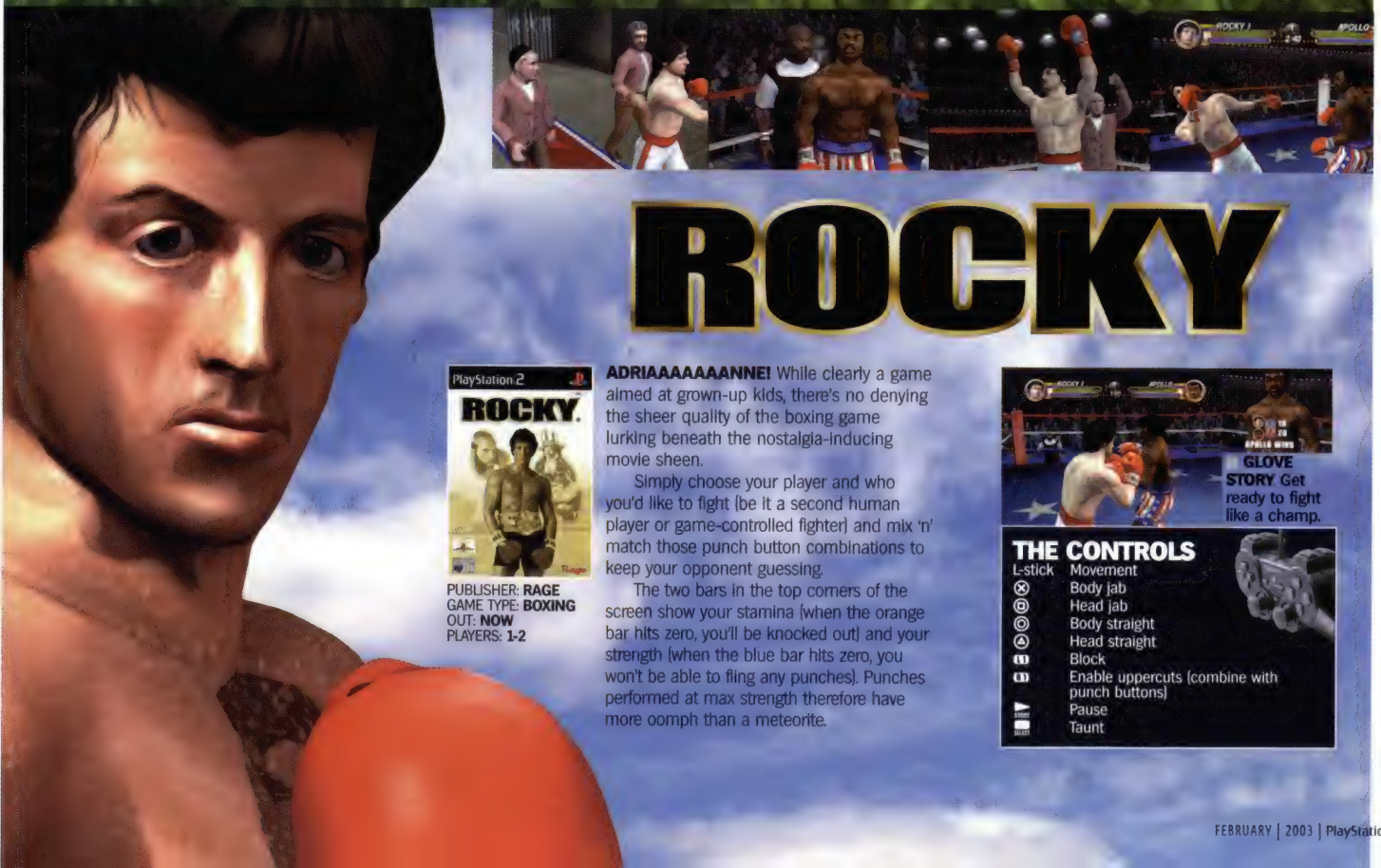
LOOK-A-LIKES
Players resemble their real-life counterparts in play as well as in looks.

THE CONTROLS

Offensive:
L-stick: Movement
X Pass
○ Shoot
△ Through ball
⊙ Long pass
□ Maximum run
○ Intermediate run
△ Choose player

Defensive:
L-stick: Movement
X Tackle 1
○ Tackle 2
△ Goalkeeper
⊙ Sliding tackle
□ Maximum run
○ Intermediate run

PlayStation 2
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
GAME TYPE: SOCCER SIM
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2 (FULL GAME 1-8)



ROCKY

ADRIAAAAAANNE! While clearly a game aimed at grown-up kids, there's no denying the sheer quality of the boxing game lurking beneath the nostalgia-inducing movie sheen.

Simply choose your player and who you'd like to fight (be it a second human player or game-controlled fighter) and mix 'n' match those punch button combinations to keep your opponent guessing.

The two bars in the top corners of the screen show your stamina (when the orange bar hits zero, you'll be knocked out) and your strength (when the blue bar hits zero, you won't be able to fling any punches). Punches performed at max strength therefore have more oomph than a meteorite.

GLOVE STORY Get ready to fight like a champ.

THE CONTROLS
L-stick: Movement
X Body jab
○ Head jab
△ Body straight
⊙ Head straight
□ Block
○ Enable uppercuts (combine with punch buttons)
△ Pause
□ Taunt

PlayStation 2
PUBLISHER: RAGE
GAME TYPE: BOXING
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2

Formula 1 FORMULA ONE 2002

OFFICIALLY LICENSED PRODUCT



PUBLISHER: SCE
GAME TYPE: F1 SIM
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2

THE CONTROLS

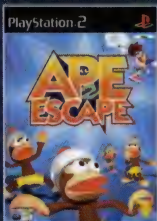
←/→ Steering
L-stick Steering
R-stick Accelerate/brake
⊗ Accelerate
⊙ Brake
△ Change view
⊙ Repeat pit command
⊙ Change gear up
⊙ Change gear down
⏸ Pause

CHOOSE YOUR LANGUAGE then choose a style of play. There are two on offer: Arcade and Simulation – one caters for the light hearted F1 gamer, the other is for all the full-on telemetry heads out there.

Once past this initial conundrum you then have to pick your team, and even your driver, before finally plumping for your chosen track from a choice of two. The rest is simple: drive well and win. You'll be able to tussle around every bend and smash up the competition as if you're playing *GTIII* in Arcade mode, but will have to avoid impacts with walls and cars if you want to survive in Simulation.



APE 2 ESCAPE



PUBLISHER: SCE
GAME TYPE: PLATFORMER
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1 [FULL GAME 1-2]

THE APES! YES! They're escaping. It's amazing how much more pesky a monkey becomes once you strap a Starsky & Hutch police light to its head.

First and foremost you must realise that ⊙ advances you through the menus. Choose New Game to get going. You'll now find yourself in the game's main hub room. Not only is there a full monkey-catching level (if you go immediately ahead up the ramp) but if you walk around to the left or right you'll find the gadget training level (that's designed to ease you into the game's many bits 'n' pieces). Also residing here is the awesome Monkey Football game we've been blabbing about for months. Have fun, experiment and bag those damned monkeys.

THE CONTROLS

L-stick Movement
R-stick Use
⊗ Select item
⊙ Select item
△ Select item
⊙ Select item
⊙ Reposition camera
⊙ Change view
⊙ Jump
⊙ Jump
⏸ Pause and options
Arrange items

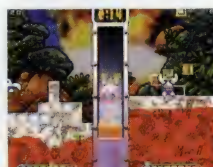


PUBLISHER: KEMCO
GAME TYPE: PUZZLE
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1
[FULL GAME 1-2]

IT'S EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE VIDEOGAME

with eggs in it. Come to think of it... No, we digress.

Tetris has a lot to answer for – most specifically the puzzle videogame in which things fall down the screen and are stacked at the bottom. An in-depth examination of the handy How To Play option clearly displayed on the Main Menu will dish the dirt on the gameplay, suffice to say that you're actually trying to reach the top of the screen here, rather than keep it at bay. Novel eh? Add to that the relentless use of eggs, weapons and anything remotely ovoid and you've got a game that's at least original, in its own special way.



THE CONTROLS

L-stick Movement
⊗ Use crate
⊙ Rotate anti-clockwise
△ Discard crate
⊙ Rotate clockwise
⊙ Drop off
⏸ Pause and options

CHECK OUT THESE VIDEOS OF THE HOTTEST NEW PS2 GAMES...



DEVIL MAY CRY 2

This visually resplendent sequel has been improved in every respect. Dante can now even run up walls, such is his outrageous cool. For those who loved the original and wanted more, you've got it. For those about to rock, we salute you. And if you want to know more about Dante's sidekick, Lucia, read our Monitor report on page 24.



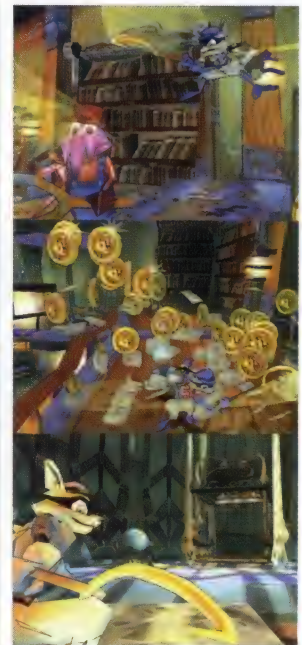
MIDNIGHT CLUB II

Darkness is the best cover for underground street racing. Hence the nocturnal exploits of our team of law-breakers, hellbent on burning both rubber and the midnight oil in pursuit of thrills, cars, ladies, sex and death. And the rest.



WAR OF THE MONSTERS

It's a brilliant idea for a game. A beat-'em-up romp infused with the spirit of fifties B-movies, 30-foot monsters inspired by Godzilla and King Kong romp through the streets of a doomed cityscape. You can even lamp your opponent with a skyscraper.



SLY RACCOON

Wholly original in graphic style and laden with enough gameplay tricks and camera thwips to thwart anyone blasé enough to dismiss Sly as 'just another platformer'. Read the full review back on page 72.



SPACE CHANNEL 5 V.2

You know how Space Channel 5 is set in, like, space? And you know how the game has dancing in it? Well how about we dress a girl up as Ulala from the game and film her in Ibiza nightclub Space? Genius.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

Until recently, the ageing Hawkster was looking at his scabby knees and lamenting his lack of pension. Now he sits astride a huge skateboard made of gold, rebutting advances from the world's most attractive women while planning Tony Hawk's 5. It's a hard life.



PRIMAL

Otherworldly oddness with blood and gore in spades. This video teases the senses and leaves the viewer wanting more. Only a full review and mighty playable demo will suffice. Coming shortly? Oh yes. Head back to page 67 to get the full skinny.



KINGDOM HEARTS PRODUCTION TRAILER

Games don't just magically appear you know. It takes men and women and time to weave PS2 magic. See the men from Squaresoft and Disney declare their love for each other and see Kingdom Hearts, the result of their beautiful union.

LAUNCHED AT LAST

OPS2 was on hand to witness the Australian launch of the game of 2002, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City.

BURSTING FROM THE GATES PS2 gamers eager to get their hands on Vice City.



HOT DOG Nothing to do with Vice City... Who cares?

AT 11:55PM ON 12 DECEMBER

2002, two OPS2 staff members stood inside the entrance to the Moore Park Harvey Norman store, bracing themselves before the inevitable stampede of gamers seeking to grab the first copies of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* on sale in Australia. Australian PS2 owners had to wait through a couple of delays while the game went through the classification process, and like its predecessor *GTA III*, had scenes involving hiring prostitutes removed. The delay did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the masses though, who burst through the doors of Australia's most active gaming store.

Before gamers could make a bee-line to the glitzy *GTA: Vice City* display, they were greeted with a drink, a hotdog, a couple of models in swimsuits (damn) and a free strategy guide for the game.

It was all a bit much for some of the attendees, with one gamer in particular unable to pull himself away from one of the displays, despite his friends asking him, "Don't you wanna go home and play it?" The tuggish gamer hushed his friends as he continued to beat a pedestrian to death with a club. No arguments followed.

Aside from the free feed and strategy guide, some attendees were

able to take home an assortment of Vice City badges, posters, swizzle sticks, caps and games. Unfortunately no-one was able to take home the models or the gorgeous Harvey Norman girls on hand, but regardless, there was enough special treatment for those hardcore enough to hang around for the stroke of midnight that OPS2 can wholeheartedly recommend rocking up to the launch of the next big thing in the PlayStation 2's library of games.

We're wondering what might happen at a retail launch for *BMX XXX...* strippers on pushbikes? We'll be there if it happens.

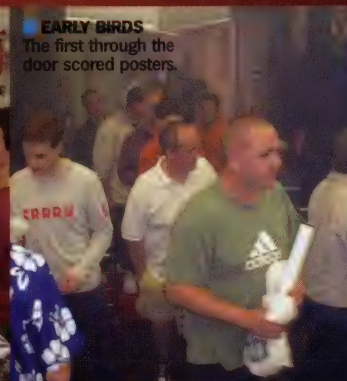
Please let it happen. ■ DT



SPRUNG
"Dude, I so can't stop perving at the models by the entrance"



RAVISHING RETAILERS
We really must get out to the shops more often...



EARLY BIRDS
The first through the door scored posters.



INSATIABLE These guys couldn't wait to get home.



FOOL'S GOLD
Despite the obstacles facing them, folks managed to find the game eventually.



SLOSHED
The Fanta went straight to this gamer's head.



WELCOME TO YOUR CELL

Ubi Soft's excellent espionage adventure sneaks on to PS2!

THIS MONTH OPS2 have good news for fans of stealth-based gaming, the niche genre that has become oh so popular since *Metal Gear Solid* set new standards on the PSone. If you were considering lashing out on an Xbox to get your hands on Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell*, the critically acclaimed 'MGS2 beater', know that Ubi Soft's current flagship title is now coming to PlayStation 2. The best part of the news is that rather than having a six month wait for a PS2 version, you'll be able to take this beauty home in March.

But what is *Splinter Cell* exactly? Well, the reason it's being hailed as a MGS2 beater is because that's the title it has the most in common with, although there are enough differences here to prevent it coming across as a clone.

The player takes on the role of Sam Fisher, an ex-Navy Seal officer, now working for an arm of the NSA known as the Third Echelon, a group that perform solo field operations so dirty and dangerous that the US government refuses to acknowledge their existence. Okay, so that's not so different from MGS, but there are enough new features

in the visuals and gameplay to provide an exciting new flavour of stealth gaming.

With stealth really being about remaining unseen and unheard, *Splinter Cell* quite appropriately focuses on sight and sound. Sam wears a special set of goggles that allow him to switch to thermal or night vision. Dashing from shadow to shadow is the poor man's way to stealthy travel, why not shoot the lights out and use the darkness as your ally? Noise certainly isn't one of Sam's allies though, and moving across surfaces that produce varying levels of noise requires care to ensure our hero isn't audibly broadcasting his location.

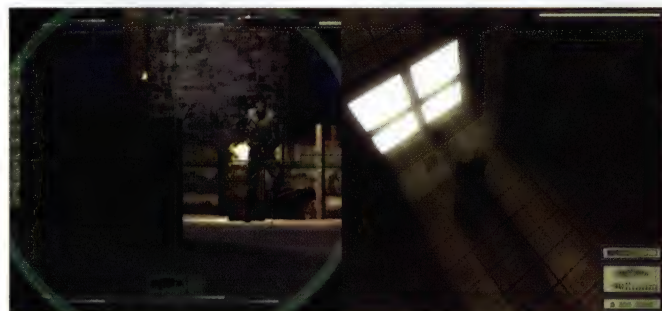
Even though we've got a handful of screens for the PlayStation 2 version of *Splinter Cell* here, we're still deadly keen to see how all the visual effects look running. The images suggest Ubi Soft Shanghai have successfully reproduced the awesome light and shadow techniques Xbox version had.

Check back next issue for a more in-depth look at the game that's arriving just in time to give MGS2: *Substance* a real battle for the title of PS2's best stealth-sim. □ DT



■ SHAFTED

Explore glamorous locations... and lift shafts too.



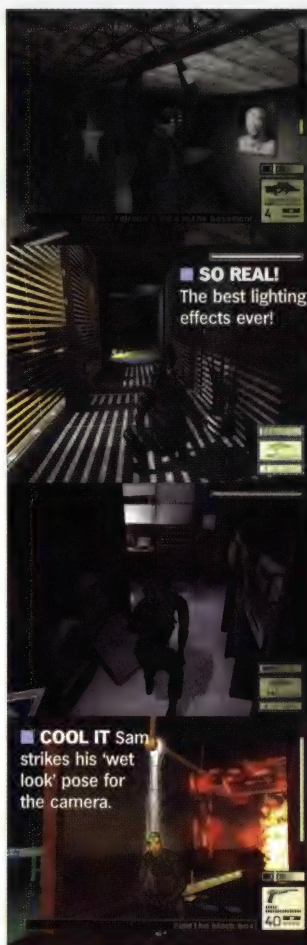
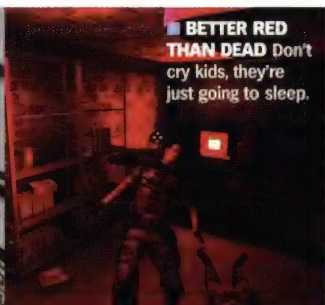
■ NIGHT VISION

Breaking away from the usual green display.



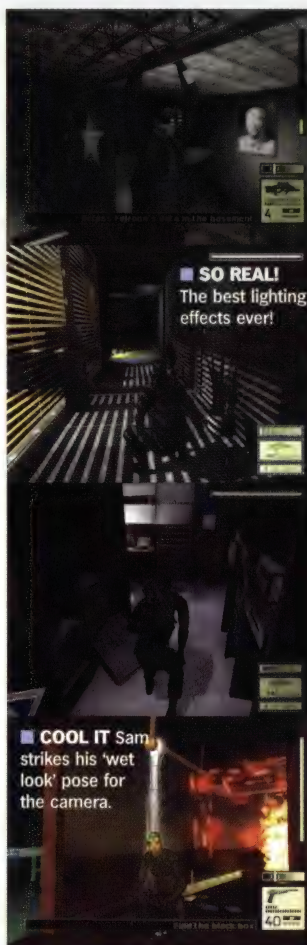
■ BETTER RED THAN DEAD

Don't cry kids, they're just going to sleep.



■ SO REAL!

The best lighting effects ever!



■ COOL IT Sam strikes his 'wet look' pose for the camera.

■ RAY OF LIGHT

Further evidence *Splinter Cell*'s awesome lighting. This is an in-game image, folks!



■ HOT STUFF

The fires are just as impressive as the shading.

MARTIAN CHRONICLES

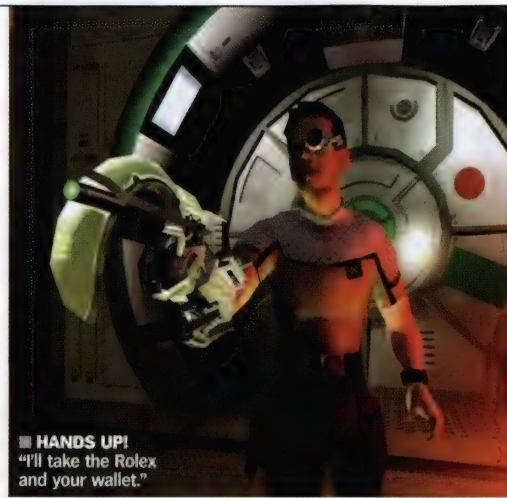
Star Wars gets sidelined for RTX Red Rock.

LUCASARTS, UNDERSTANDABLY tired of rendering light sabers and bad hairstyles, has pulled away from the galaxy far, far away for this latest sci-fi action/adventure. Set 100 years from now, the plot revolves around an alien invasion of Earth's colony on Mars.

Instead of just nuking the site from orbit, Terran authorities opt instead for a more personal, face-to-fist reclamation scheme. Say 'hello' to Eugene Wheeler, an all-round bad boy scout and (R)adical (T)actics e(X)pert. Despite resembling someone as inoffensive as an inner city cycle courier, the central character is, in fact, a marvel of hi-tech bioengineering.

Having lost both an eye and a forearm in a previous mission, Wheeler can call on an array of cybernetic upgrades in his pursuit of the light-emitting enemy. With four different visual enhancements available (Naviscan, Thermoscan, Electroscan and Bioscan) plus a mini arsenal of weapons for his stump, this lad needs back-up like a motorbike needs an ashtray. And his technical savvy doesn't let up there. Accompanying him on his adventures is his Independent

Removable Information System - aka IRIS. Using this AI interface, Wheeler can hack into the colony's systems and take control of various 'bots in order to solve puzzles or explore hazardous environments. Bolt-on a mini-game that has you registering colonial survivors in an MGS2 kinda way and the ability to set traps using Tofu bars, and you can see why we're reckoning this'll do the numbers even without the cinematic leverage. ☐ JB



■ **HANDS UP!** "I'll take the Rolex and your wallet."



■ **VIOLENCE!** There goes the 'G' rating.

■ **LONELY?** The women are on Venus, Eugene.

CEL BOX ACHES

Digital Fiction gives boxing the painting by numbers look in *Black & Bruised*.

THERE AREN'T MANY GENRES that haven't been given the stylised colouring-book look. However, if you discount the old cartoony meanderings of *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*, it's possible that Digital Fiction's *Black & Bruised* is the first truly cel-shaded boxing game.

Forget the tactical slugging you might have become accustomed to in *Knockout Kings* or *Rocky*. *Black & Bruised* is about flurries of combination moves and power-ups - one of which involves green slime erupting from your head (no, we can't explain).

To suit the outrageous special moves there's a collection of larger-than-life male and female boxers - fat oafs, glamorous ladies, moustachioed cads and spindly chancers with names like King Hippo, Macho Man and Glass Joe. Play through the game in the 'boxer's life' option and these characters' day-to-day existence is presented to you in FMV stories that have an effect on your next fight. In one sequence, aerobics instructor Janet wounds one of her hands with a pair of scissors, making it more painful to punch with her injured left hand. *Black & Bruised's* success will ultimately depend on the quality of boxing on offer rather than its gags. But we've already been seduced by its distinctive visual appeal. ☐ GW



■ **FASHION POLICE** "I'll dish out the punishment now for that one."



■ **EFFECTIVE** Other visual effects are combined with the cel-shaded graphics.



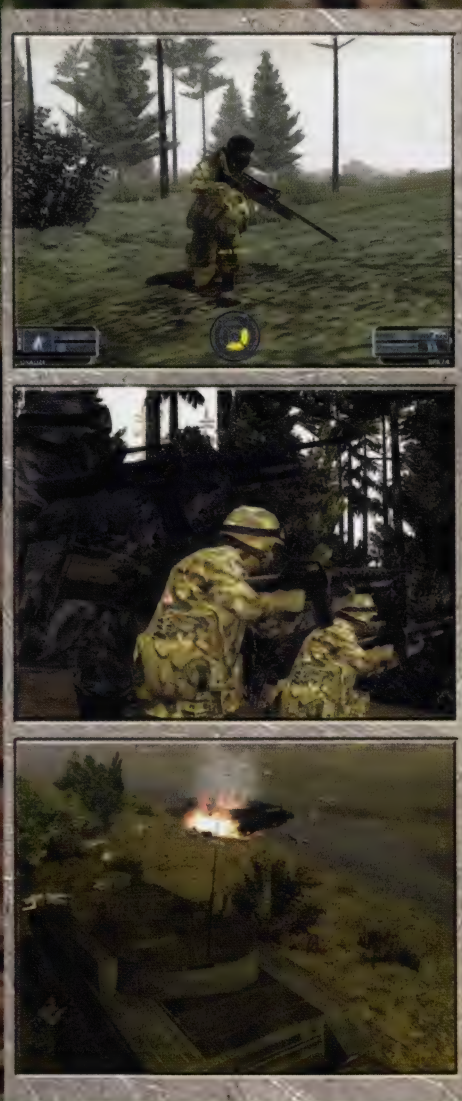
■ **GIMP MAN!** Be amused or afraid, folks.



■ **Float like a butterfly...** Sting like a taser.

re-con (n): the sole unit an infantry battalion relies on for intelligence operations. Arguably the most specialized and highly trained troop formation of any regiment.

If you meet them in combat...



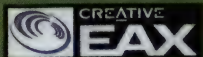
**YOU'RE
ALREADY
DEAD.**

Prepare yourself as the PC Game of 2001 hits PS2 and Xbox in time for Christmas.

Features missions from the original PC game and the add-on, Desert Siege



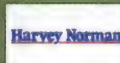
PlayStation 2



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HALO HUNTER?

Universal ready to weave magic with a space ace up their sleeve.

DESPITE THE XBOX'S relative lack of choice with its software line-up, its flagship title *Halo* has proven to be a huge hit among first person shooter fans, thanks mostly to its seamless integration of vehicles and complex AI. With those ingredients in mind, there's a futuristic first-person shooter coming to PS2 that has all the signs of being a potential *Halo* beater. That game is *Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter*.

The game puts the player in the role of a man who is framed and sent to jail who upon being released sets about exacting revenge on those that put him away. Having a seamless gaming experience has proven to be a winning formula for first-person shooters, with games like *Half-Life* proving that the sensation of not missing a thing is something gamers want. *Mace Griffin* looks set to deliver this in a sci-fi scenario, with the player getting a non-stop take of the action as it moves from run-and-gun battles in space stations, capital ships and planetary locations, through to slipping into the cockpit of six different kinds of space craft where the game becomes a space combat flight simulator.

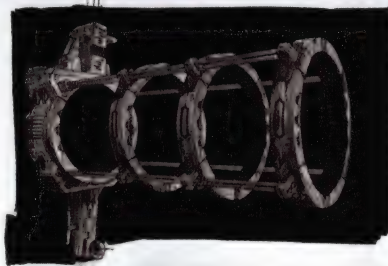
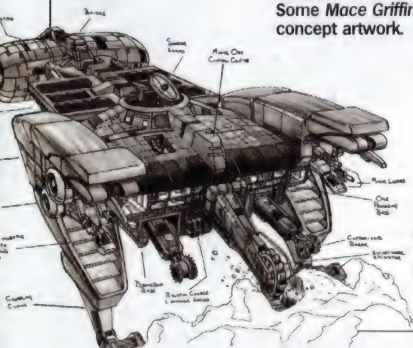
OPS2 expect the flight-sim elements to be a treat, as the developers Warthog are responsible for *StarLancer*, one of the better games in the genre on PC. The footage Vivendi had put together for us showed that the developers appear to have had no trouble translating their skills with these kind of games from PC to console. *OPS2* saw lasers causing brilliant lighting effects through dense asteroid fields, highlighting just how much complex geometry the game is throwing about. It's not just about flying about in a fighter craft either, as Mace will be able to pilot huge space cruisers as well as the smaller craft.

The first person shooter side of things looks promising too, with frame rates being smooth even at this early stage. Some of the enemies are looking very cool, with brilliantly animated robotic warriors that look like mini-mechs being the favourite of the *OPS2* crew.

More info on this ace space adventure we draw closer to its release in March or April, which could be a contender for first-person shooter of the year if it lives up to the potential it's already displayed. **DT**



CONCEIVE THIS
Some Mace Griffin concept artwork.



DINOSAURS DOWN UNDER

Aussie developer Blue Tongue takes *OPS2* on a walk through the park.

JURASSIC PARK AND video games have had a torrid time together at best. Games like *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* on PSone have been quite dire, but Australian developers Blue Tongue look set to buck the trend with their world-building strategy game, *Jurassic Park*. The game works on the same idea as the first film, to create a theme park where dinosaurs are the attraction. This is a far cry from games in the past that have just focused on action concepts that hungry dinosaurs and tasty humans bring to mind.

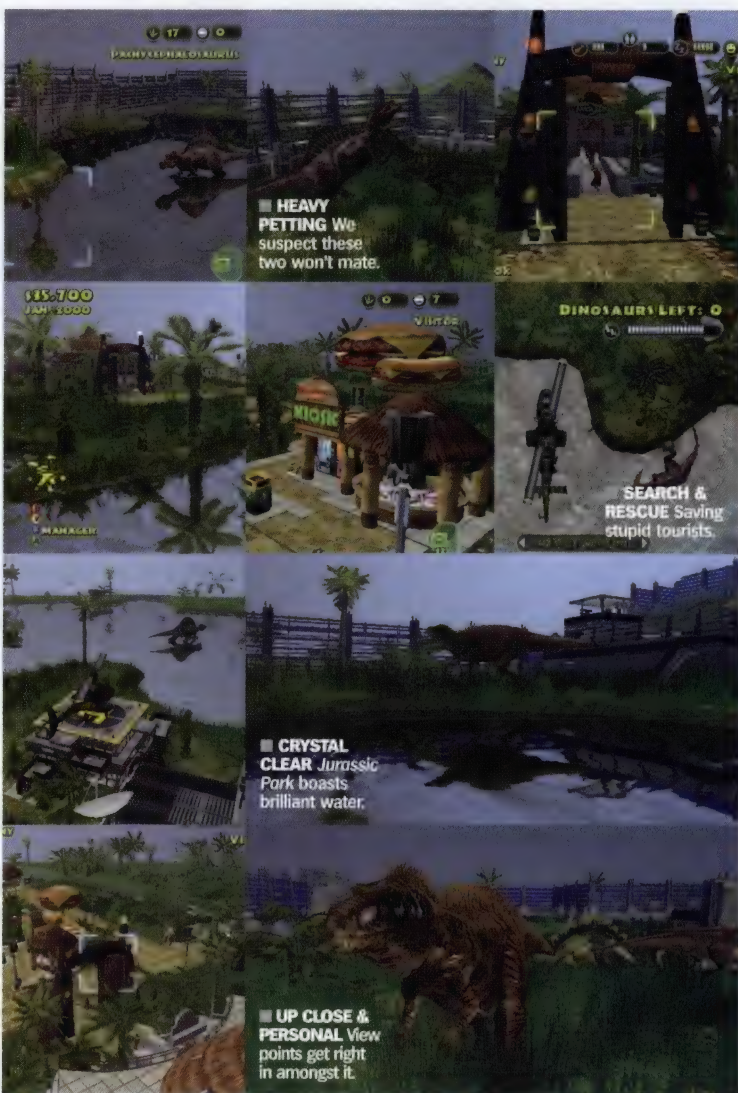
Jurassic Park offers strategy challenges on multiple fronts combining the world-building elements and money making considerations of games such as *Theme Park World*, while the ability to treat your dinosaurs with chemicals brewed in the dino-vet lab introduce concepts of genetic engineering. Healthy dinosaurs breed to produce more impressive offspring, which in turn draw bigger crowds.

While nailing resource management in many strategy games seems like work, Blue Tongue have introduced all manner of funny quirks to make dealing with these issues fun. Dinosaurs need to eat, so you may need to set up an animal dispenser, so that tasty lamb cutlets are making themselves available for your menagerie of extinct lizards. We loved it, but we're sure the humour may be lost on a few vegetarians out there.

Although the game is appearing on other consoles and on the PC, all the versions have been developed concurrently, and we've been assured that the control scheme for this game has been put together with the PS2 in mind.

Early video footage looks very promising with the parks and creatures looking great in full 3D. The production values are high across the board, with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra handling the soundtrack arranged by Blue Tongue's Stephan Schutze.

With this looking like one of the best PS2 games to be developed in Australia thus far, be sure to keep checking *OPS2* for more on this most amusing strategy gem. **DT**



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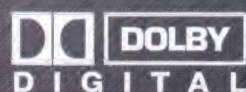
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TEKKEN THE TOP 10 PLAYERS

The fight for survival delivers Australia's Tekken 4 finalists.

BETWEEN 26 OCTOBER and 16 November last year, countless Australian Tekken enthusiasts blistered their digits at Harvey Norman stores around the country, lodging in their scores and times for the Official Australian Tekken 4 Competition.

Players were able to use the character of their choice to try and achieve as many victories as possible in Tekken 4's Survival mode, with the top ten results earning a place in the final to be held in. Although the entrants weren't bumping shoulders with each other, the competition was pretty fierce, with the tenth and final qualifying score being decided by the shortest time, with a tie for the

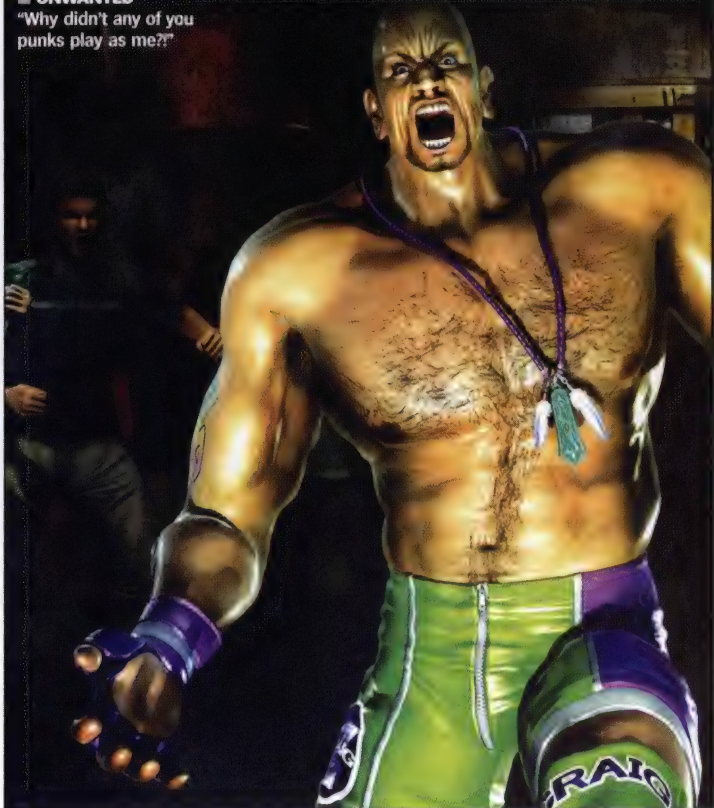
number of bouts survived.

OPS2 was quite frankly flabbergasted at some of the qualifying scores with David Andrew Barba from Queensland topping the Tekken table with a staggering 205 victories using Heihachi! Five entrants slugged their way past the one hundred victories mark, so there's going to be some true masters duking it out in the Australian final, taking place late January in Sydney.

Naturally, OPS2 will be at the final so we can unveil the country's top Tekken 4 player, who will go on to represent us all at the Grand Final in London on 6 March. Till then, gawk at the scores of the ten finalists who'll soon be battling for the national title. □ DT

NAME	CHARACTER USED	WINS	TIME
DAVID ANDREW BARBA	HEIHACHI	205	45:03
MARK MAYONA	HEIHACHI	177	39:00
H-J KIM	JIN	160	42:41
JUSTIN JACKSON	HEIHACHI	147	42:04
YI LU	JIN	132	31:25
TONY PERT	LING	98	35:46
AARON ARRIOLA	STEVE	90	23:45
BEN CALDERWOOD	EDDY	90	36:54
ALEX MALANO	PAUL	89	24:57
DIEGO MALANO	STEVE	84	20:29

■ **UNWANTED**
"Why didn't any of you punks play as me?!"



COMBAT EVOLVED

Sega's legendary fighting game series continues to grow

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 was the first instalment of the series to grace the PS2, and also the first to offer some serious longevity for solo gamers with the awesome Kumite mode. Sega have an updated version of the game in the works, *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution*.

So what exactly has evolved here then? For starters there are two new characters, Goh Hinogami – a Japanese assassin specialising in Judo (odd choice of martial art for a killer) and Brad Burns – an Italian kick-boxing master (with a decidedly non-Mediterranean name).

A new Quest mode gives the player a sort of 'travelling gamer' scenario, by having the player travel from one gaming centre to another, challenging players, entering tournaments, eventually aiming for the national titles. Five hundred real players are being represented using their actual play data to simulate their style of play. Further to that, replays of matches from some of the top players will be included and the combo lists in the training modes have been updated with techniques used by the best.

Without the announcement of things like a Tag-Team mode, OPS2 suspect that this will probably fail to win over those that aren't already into fighting games, although AM2 claim to have improved the visuals and loading times, and until we see it running we won't know either way.

At this point *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution* has only been announced for release in Japan, but keep checking OPS2 for word of a PAL version. □ DT



ebay.COM.AU

NEWS FOR FEBRUARY

Vectrex is the retro gaming connoisseur's system of choice. It's an extremely elegant and unique console that uses razor-sharp vector graphics. It has a built-in screen and detachable controller with four buttons. It uses cartridges but has an excellent built-in game called *MineStorm*, an *Asteroids* clone.

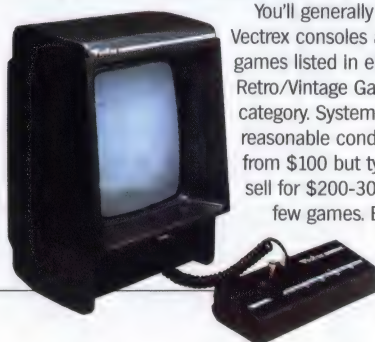
Vectrex was released in Australia in 1983 by Milton Bradley just before the big collapse of the videogame industry, and its high price tag (\$400) ensured it never stood a chance. Consequently, machines are now very rare. Less than 30 games were released during its short two-year lifespan on shop shelves.

You'll generally find Vectrex consoles and games listed in eBay's Retro/Vintage Games category. Systems in reasonable condition start from \$100 but typically sell for \$200-300 with a few games. Boxed

games with their instructions and coloured screen overlays sell for around \$30-50, with some very rare titles fetching well over \$100.

Prices are generally lower if you buy Vectrex games from the US on ebay.com. Games from anywhere in the world will play on an Aussie Vectrex, but obviously importing a machine from overseas is to be avoided because of its heavy weight and different voltage. □ JH

■ **LET'S GO RETRO** It may be old, but the Vectrex pioneered vector graphics.





PS2 ONE DECEMBER TOP 20 GAMES

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	PUBLISHER
1	Harry Potter Chamber Of Secret	Adventure	
2	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Sports	
3	Stuart Little 2	Adventure	
4	Lilo & Stitch Trouble In Pards	Adventure	
5	Digimon World 3	Adventure	
6	FIFA 2003	Sports	
7	Treasure Planet	Adventure	
8	World Rally Champ 02 Arcade	Racing	
9	Tomb Raider 3 & 4 Collectors	Adventure	
10	Digimon Rumble Arena	Action	
11	NBA Live 2003	Sports	
12	Jonah Lomu + WTC	Compilation	
13	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure	
14	World's Scariest Police	Racing	
15	Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	Family	
16	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Ptm	Sports	
17	Space Chase Pack	Compilation	
18	Final Fantasy Anthology	RPG	
19	Formula One Arcade	Racing	
20	Internatnl Cricket Captn	Sports	

PS2 DECEMBER TOP 20 GAMES

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	PUBLISHER
1	GTA: Vice City	Adventure	
2	The Getaway	Adventure	
3	Harry Potter Chamber Of Secret	Adventure	
4	Lord Of The Rings Two Towers	RPG	
5	Xtra Pack Inc. Tony Hawk 4	Sports	
6	Kingdom Hearts	Adventure	
7	V8 Supercars	Racing	
8	Dragonball Z: Budokai Fighters	Action	
9	Bond 007: Nightfire	Action	
10	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Sports	
11	WRC 2 Extreme	Racing	
12	WWE Smackdown 4 Shut Mouth	Sports	
13	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action	
14	Ratchet & Clank	Adventure	
15	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing	
16	Collin McRae Rally 3	Racing	
17	Lord Of The Rings: Fellowship	Adventure	
18	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Strategy	
19	Spyro: Enter The Dragonfly	Adventure	
20	FIFA 2003	Sports	

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

Ape Escape 2
Battle Engine Aquila
IronStorm
Legends Of Wrestling 2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance
Midnight Club 2
Sly Raccoon
The Sims

Category

Platformer
Shoot-'em-up
FPS
Wrestling
Action
Driving
Platformer
God sim

Publisher

SCE
Infogrames
Wanadoo
Acclaim
Konami
Rockstar
SCE
EA

FEBRUARY

Batman: Dark Tomorrow
Indiana Jones And The Emperor's Tomb
Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance
Music 3
Primal
Space Channel 5.2

Category

Action
Action/adventure
Action/adventure
Beat-'em-up
Music creation
Adventure
Rhythm action

Publisher

Kemco
Activision
Eidos
Midway
Jester Int.
SCE
SCE

MARCH

Blood Rayne
Def Jam Vendetta
Mark Of Kri
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc
War Of The Monsters
XIII
Zapper

Category

Action
Wrestling
Adventure
Platformer
Action
FPS
Platformer

Publisher

Universal
EA
SCE
Ubi Soft
SCE
Ubi Soft
Infogrames

APRIL

Blood Rayne
Dark Chronicle
Dead To Rights
Def Jam Vendetta
Die Hard: Vendetta
ISS 3
Moto GP3
RTX Red Rock

Category

Action/adventure
RPG
Action
Wrestling
FPS
Football sim
Racing

Publisher

Universal
SCEE
SCEE
EA
Universal
Konami
SCEE

Shinobi
Starcraft: Ghost
WWE Crush Hour

Category

Action/adventure
Action
Action
Driving/action

Publisher

Activision
SCEE
Universal
THQ

MAY

Black And Bruised
Interactive Enter The Matrix
Fire Warrior
Gladius
Hardware
Silent Hill 3
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs
Speed Kings
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Raven Shield

Category

Boxing
Action/adventure
FPS
Strategy
Online action
Survival horror
Combat sim
Driving
Action

Publisher

Universal
Infogrames
THQ
Activision
SCEE
Konami
SCEE
Acclaim
Ubi Soft

JUNE

Freedom: Battle For Liberty Island
Red Dead Revolver
Return To Castle Wolfenstein
Rise To Honor
The Great Escape

Category

Action/adventure
Action
FPS
Action
Action/adventure

Publisher

EA
Capcom
Activision
SCEE
SCI

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

TBC 2003

Alter Echo
Area 51
Batman 2
Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon
Celebrity Deathmatch
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Curse
Destruction Derby 4
Dragon's Lair 3D
Driver 3
Ecks Vs Sever
Enclave
EverQuest Online Adventures
EXO
Falcone: Into The Maelstrom
Far Cry
Fear Effect: Inferno
Final Fantasy X-2
Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse
Freaky Flyers
Frequency 2
Futurama
Fugitive Hunter
Ghost Hunter
Gio Gio's Bizarre Adventure
Gladator
Good Cop, Bad Cop
Judge Dredd Vs Judge Death
King Of Route 66
Lamborghini
Mafia
My Street
NBA Ballers
NBA Starting Five
Pac-Man World 2
Pillage
Project BG & E
Pterosaur
Raging Blades
Resident Evil Network
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure
Seven Samurai
Shoot To Kill
Soul Calibur II
Starsky And Hutch
Star Wars: Galaxies
Sulkoden III
This Is Football 2004
Tribes: Aerial Assault
True Crime: Streets Of LA
Urban Freestyle
World Rally Championship Online
Xenosaga
XIII

Category

Adventure
Adventure
Action
Adventure
Beat-'em-up
Beat-'em-up
Adventure
Driving
Action
Driving/action
FPS
Adventure
Online RPG
Mech action
FPS
Action
Adventure
RPG
Action
Flight action
Rhythm action
Adventure
FPS
Adventure
Action/adventure
Beat-'em-up
Adventure
Action
Driving
Racing
Action/adventure
Party game
Basketball sim
Basketball sim
Platformer
RPG
Platformer
Adventure
RPG
Online adventure
Action/adventure
Action
FPS
Beat-'em-up
Driving/action
Online RPG
RPG
Football sim
FPS
Driving/action
Extreme sports
Online racing
RPG
FPS

Publisher

THQ
Midway
Ubi Soft
TBC
Take 2
Ubi Soft
Wanadoo
SCEE
Encore
Infogrames
Bam!
Swing!
TBC
Infogrames
Virgin
Ubi Soft
Eidos
SCEE
3DO
Midway
SCEE
SCI
Infogrames
SCEE
Capcom
Midway
TBC
Universal
TBC
Rage
Take 2
SCEE
Midway
Konami
SCEE
TBC
Ubi Soft
TBC
Wanadoo
Capcom
Tecmo
Sammy
Codemasters
TBC
Empire
Activision
Konami
SCEE
Sierra
Activision
Acclaim
SCEE
TBC
Ubi Soft

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Previewing the new games you voted to read about



WELCOME TO MONITOR!

SO WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN? Our pledge is to keep all the big games under constant surveillance, as directed by you! Whenever a cool new game bleeps loud on your radar, write to us – we'll dig up exclusive new screens, information and interviews with the creators, or bring you first impressions from playable code.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED? To vote in our Most Wanted charts email us on OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au and we'll also look for comments from the official forums at au.playstation.com. Get voting now!

INFO BURSTS Keep an eye out for these blobs, where we'll drop in facts, rants, quotations, devil's advocate opinions and anything extra you should know.

INFO BOX It's here you'll find out who makes a game, how complete it is, when it's due to hit the stores and if there's any more information online.

LATEST SCREENS So how's the game looking? We show the hits of the future in all their visual splendour.

OPINION BOX What do we think of it so far? We reveal our thoughts and also include what you'd like to see in the game – visit the forums at au.playstation.com to get involved.



MOST WANTED

Which upcoming games do you want to see more of? Email or write to us and we'll uncover the latest details on your future favourites!

POSITION	GAME	WHAT?
1	 DEVIL MAY CRY 2 With constant emails and requests for info on this one, we just had to give it one more look before we review.	NEW SCREENS PAGE 24 EXCLUSIVE!
2	 MGS2: SUBSTANCE The review code we received this month had a scratch. ARGH! With so many votes, we left in the charts to show public opinion.	HONORABLE MENTION
3	 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE Invisible bird demons, goat-horned weirdos and crazy bitey monkey things: meet Dante's new malevolent menagerie.	NEW SCREENS PAGE 32 EXCLUSIVE!
4 NEW	 BROKEN SWORD 3 After enough emails from adventure game fiends, OPS2 bring you a serious look at the series' transition to 3D.	NEW SCREENS PAGE 30 EXCLUSIVE!
5 NEW	 RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC It looks like platform gamers have yet another reason to love their PS2.	HANDS-ON PAGE 27 EXCLUSIVE!

ALSO IN monitor THIS MONTH

PRIDE FC.....PAGE 26
ZONE OF ENDERS 2.....PAGE 28
SPACE CHANNEL 5 V.2.....PAGE 31
THE MARK OF KRI.....PAGE 33



Which forthcoming games would you like to see in Monitor next month? Visit the forums at au.playstation.com, email us at OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au (remember to put 'Monitor' in the subject line) or write by post to Monitor, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 2002. Vote now!

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NEW SCREENS



NAME Devil May Cry 2
PUBLISHER Capcom
DEVELOPER Capcom (Production Studio 1)
WEB SITE www.capcom.co.jp/devil2
RELEASE March

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 75%

■ **MONKEY MAGIC** A far cry from Ape Escape 2.



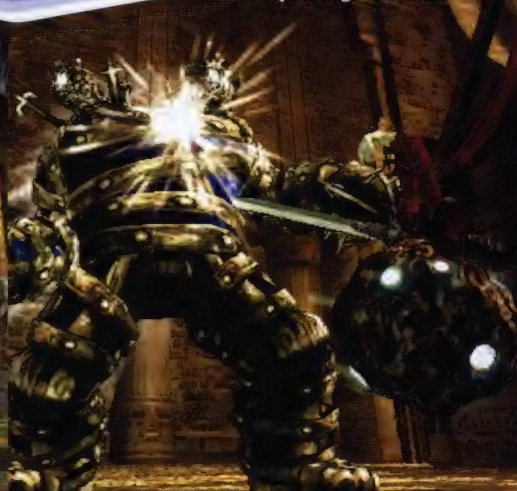
ORAL ONLINE

DMC2 jumpies can hear voice samples of both Dante and the lovely Lucia over at capcom.co.jp/devil2. Our favourite quote so far has to be Dante's, "Less talk, more screams." Our hopes exactly.

■ **I'M HORNY** The flying goat demons may sound amusing. They're not.



■ **BRIGHT SPARKS** Ooh, that's just going to make him angry. Try making friends instead.



■ **HEAVY METAL** The meat cleaver/iron maiden combo is pretty striking.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

Not too sure about all the crying. Plenty of devils, though...

SO, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT? The first enemies to get stuck into in *Devil May Cry 2* will be skeletal swordsmen, encased in iron maidens. They come in several guises – some have huge swords, others carry giant cleavers. Even more impressive are the guys who lob shields at you frisbee-style. Swords are better than guns here, and back flips off the walls will allow you to get slashing attacks in from above. There are plenty of foes to choose from, even in the early levels. But you'd be forgiven for getting a little scared as the crazy bitey-monkey demons run amok while you're trapped in the courtyard area.

ANY ACTION IN THE AIR? Damn straight. But when you first encounter one of the flying bird-demons you'd be forgiven for missing it. These nasties are invisible until they attack, but as long as you keep both of your guns blazing and stay on the move (and in the air), it's fairly simple to bring them down. Less easy to bag are the two goat-horned, leather-winged flyers that begin the levels as statues. Given the chance, they'll happily fire electric yellow death from their hands and can easily get the better of you when they fight together. So it's best to down one early on.

AND WHO'S THE DADDY? Whoa momma! The metal-and-mace nightmare boss you'll see on this page

corners you after an arduous flight up the inside of a gothic tower. He's got boulders on chains where his arms should be, so he's understandably slightly miffed. There's no time for a hug though – he quickly proceeds to fling and swing his massive balls at you with frightening accuracy. Our tip? Get in close, use all of your acrobatic skills and put him to the sword. He's a hard bastard, but providing you have a decent amount of health under your belt, his demise should be pretty straightforward.

WHO'S THE BABE ON THE NEXT PAGE THEN? You lot have short memories. This is Lucia, the flame-haired vixen set to join Dante as the second playable character in *Devil May Cry 2*. These are the first shots of the lass in action, dishing out the good news. We like to think she looks a bit like Isla Fisher, had she decided to pursue a career as a demon-slaying ninja rather than as one of our daytime soap exports.

SO HOW DOES SHE FIT INTO THE GAME? Intriguingly, retail sources in Japan recently let slip that *Devil May Cry 2* will be released as a two-disc set, with one disc featuring Dante's adventure and the other containing Lucia's levels. Hopefully this should work in a similar way to Capcom's *Resident Evil 2* on PSone, with two interlocking story lines.

■ **HE'S GOT BALLS** Timing is everything when the big lug throws a right.

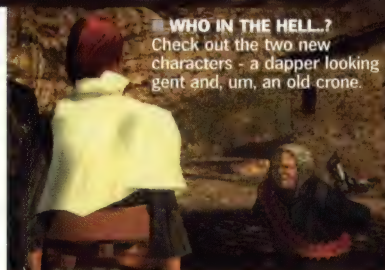


■ **GOAT FURY** He's got wings, lightning in his arms and he's angry. Leg it!





RUMOUR HAS IT
This is completely unconfirmed, but apparently a small number of people who pre-order Devil May Cry 2 in Japan will receive a limited edition replica of Dante's Alastor sword.



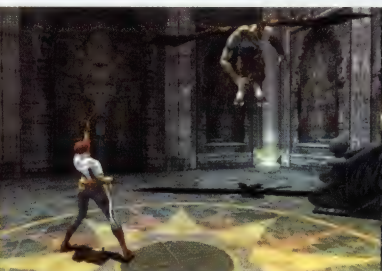
WHO IN THE HELL?
Check out the two new characters - a dapper looking gent and, um, an old crone.



MONSTER MASH
The fiery redhead takes down the evil hellspawn with ease.



PIE IN THE SKY
Make mincemeat out of unearthly creatures.



CAN SHE HANDLE HERSELF, THOUGH? Let's bloody hope so, eh! As tends to be the case with female action characters, Lucia looks to be very nimble, with speedy attacks compensating for the obvious lack of firepower. From these screenshots her offensive repertoire seems to be based on those two wickedly-curved blades and her martial arts prowess. Which, frankly, doesn't sound much of an arsenal given the gargantuan monstrosities the game's going to throw at her. But take a look at the screens again. There's little Lucia, sticking flying demons with her throwing knives and putting the boot into a cleaver-wielding wraith like she hasn't got a care in the world. That feeling? Love at first sight. ☐ **MW**

opinion

PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

DEVIL MAY CRY 2 continues to look great. God only knows what we'll be seeing in the final version. Bosses are big, ugly and hard-assed and each has its own fiendish attack.

WHAT WE WANT

A few more weeks to pass so we'll finally get a review build to indulge in!

WHAT YOU WANT

Darlops2 says, "I hope that it's not as repetitive this time around."

WHAT THEY WANT

A sequel that adds something fresh to DMC but keeps the style and substance fans love.

HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID ☐ TEPID ☐ WARM ☐ HOT ☐ BOILING ☐ MELTDOWN ☐



NAME *Pride FC*
PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER Anchor Inc.
WEB SITE www.thq.com/PrideFC/
RELEASE February 2003

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE **70%**

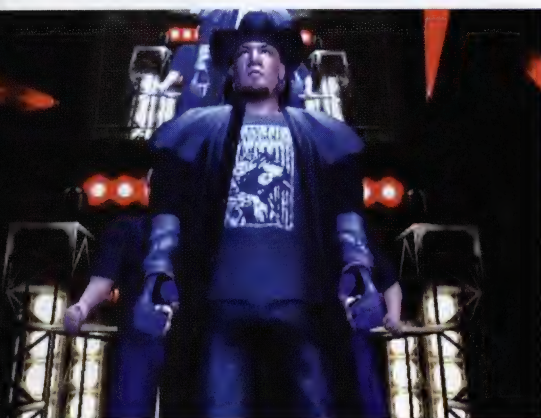


HIT 'EM OR HUG 'EM
Fighters tend to specialise either in striking or grappling and submission.

DEFECTS

It could well be that the reason we're now seeing a *Pride FC* video game is because signs suggest it may be taking over as the world's number one mixed martial arts entertainment, with some fighters leaving *UFC* for *Pride FC*.

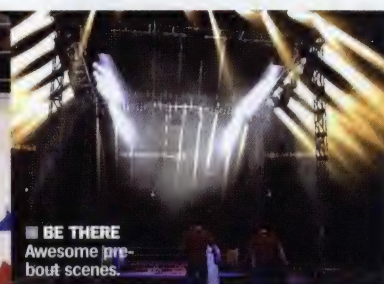
YOU LOST? Cattle-rustler with boxing gloves. It's a look.



IN A RUSH?
"Oh god, I forgot to wear pants."



BULLSEYE No target too small for this fighter.



BE THERE
Awesome pre-bout scenes.



SHRINKAGE?
"No Bob, I swear I can't see a thing."

PRIDE FC

Now *UFC* has some competition for the mixed-martial arts title.

SO IT'S NOT A LITTLE KNOWN EUROPEAN

FOOTBALL CLUB? No. *Pride FC* is the Japanese alternative to *UFC* (Ultimate Fighting Championship), which has till now been the only realistic mixed martial arts game series on any system. Working on much the same principle, *Pride FC* sees fighters from around the globe competing in what is basically no holds barred fighting. The primary difference between the two tournaments is that *Pride FC* takes place in a conventional fighting ring. This may be the first you've heard of *Pride FC*, but THQ have the license to handle all *Pride FC* games for another four years, so we doubt this will be the last.

DOES IT PLAY MUCH LIKE *UFC* THEN? An extremely valid question, because the two titles bear more in common than the basic mixed martial arts premise. Anchor Inc. were the developers of the first *UFC* game on Dreamcast, and they've done little to hide the fact that the same game engine has been used. The same control scheme has been used again with the \odot , \triangle , \square and \times buttons handling left punch, right punch, left kick and right kick respectively. Sort of like *Tekken*, except that the combos aren't so ludicrously long and over the top.

SO DOES PRIDE FC BRING TO THE TABLE THEN?

For starters, the visuals have taken a noteworthy shot in the arm, with the character models now boasting 5000 polygons each. The action in the ring itself has also taken a tweak, with a more fluid look and feel to the grappling system, and new moves

such as being able to kick at your opponent from the ground when you've been knocked prone. An option to remove the health bars means that players can use cheap tactics to know exactly when to push for the end of the bout, something that plague the *UFC* games a bit. Create-A-Player also appears infinitely more detailed than in the *UFC* games with far more options to allow players to create a fighter more to their liking. This goes as far as allowing the player to tailor their entrance, right down to the background music. On the whole, there's more polish. Whether or not there'll be enough to make this appealing for the casual gamer, *OPS2* will only be able to say once a newer build of the game comes in. \square DT

opinion

PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

PRIDE FC is looking like it's going to be the best of the ultra-realistic fighting games around, with the challenge of outshining its competitors. So long as Anchor Inc. can include enough to differentiate this from *UFC*, it looks to be a worthy contender.

WHAT WE WANT	WHAT YOU WANT	WHAT THEY WANT
Further tweaks to the engine so it feels less like another <i>UFC</i> game.	John H. from Victoria wrote in calling for one hit knockouts. Good news, they're in!	To win over a larger part of the market than just the fighting game nuts.

HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID ☐ TEPID ☐ WARM ☐ **HOT** ☒ BOILING ☐ MELTDOWN ☐



OPEN UP A CAN OF WHUP-ASS!

Littered throughout the levels are power-ups in the form of tin cans. Collecting the power-ups transforms Rayman and gives him new abilities, from the strength to break through rocks to the ability to shoot whirlwinds to move platforms. Those abilities only last for a brief period though, which gives a nice puzzle element to the levels as you plan your way through them.



MAGIC MOMENTS

Brilliant visual effects make scenes like this a treat.



HIM SHADY

Rayman and other entities cast nifty accurate shadows.



FAR FROM DRAB

Colourful environments bring Rayman 3 to life.



RAYMAN 3

Ubi Soft set out to prove that everybody loves Rayman... again.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS 'HOODLUM' BUSINESS? The story goes that a bunch of evil types have been drinking lots of plum juice. This juice gives them extraordinary powers to create an army of wicked 'hoodlums' to wreak havoc in Rayman's world. But let's not dwell on the preposterous plot, all you need to know is that Rayman is back and better than ever. The game features around 44 huge levels, smarter enemy AI and a plethora of new moves for the main man himself. What's more, the trademark humour is even more abundant this time and the one-liners come thick and fast.

SO HOW'S IT LOOKING? Absolutely gorgeous. The game stays at a silky smooth 60 frames per second as you battle your way through a multitude of cartoon environments, from snowy peaks to murky swamps. The animation on the enemies is fluid and believable, and our limbless hero has never looked so good. The developers have given 200 different animations to Rayman alone. Extra effort has been put into Rayman's facial expressions to give a more visual punch to those funny catch phrases. Even though the build that OPS2 was given was far from complete, the environmental textures were detailed and very crisp. Although in a slight departure from the previous games, Rayman 3 has a more shadowy, sinister look overall. The lighting effects are particularly cool, and at one point we found ourselves gaping at the sinuous silhouettes cast by the characters rather than the characters themselves!



THE BIGGER THEY ARE

The more you look small.

monitor

HANDS-ON



NAME Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
DEVELOPER Ubi Soft
WEBSITE www.hoodlumsworld.com
RELEASE March

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%



DOES RAYMAN HAVE ANY NEW ABILITIES? Though the action-adventure gameplay elements that the series is known for remain intact, for Hoodlum Havoc the developers have placed a new emphasis on combat. Aside from his standard 'wind-up' fist attacks, Rayman can now use grappling hooks, whirlwind attacks, spiky fists and more to attack the 20-odd different hoodlum types. You can even get your hands on the new throttle copter, a grunty overhaul of Rayman's standard helicopter move. The level design varies quite a bit as well. For the most part it is a platform affair, but along the way you'll find yourself hanggliding through the woods and riding a hot-rodded speederbike with your sidekick, Globox. At the moment there are a few nagging camera issues, which are almost obligatory in third person games these days, but OPS2 is confident the kinks will be ironed out before the final release. ☐ TO

opinion

PlayStation 2

RAYMAN 2 was a huge hit with PS2 owners and remains one of the console's highest sellers. From what we here at OPS2 have seen of Rayman 3 we can only recommend that you start saving now.

WHAT WE WANT

■ A deeply immersive narrative rather than a mindless 'collect-em-up' platformer.

WHAT YOU WANT

■ Project Wonderboy reckons "this game looks sweet. I'm glad Rayman hasn't gone off into anonymity."

WHAT THEY WANT

■ To perpetuate the series' success and take Rayman to a new level.

HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID ☐ TEPID ☐ WARM ☐ HOT ☒ BOILING ☐ MELTDOWN ☐



THROW A PUNCH

Being limbless gives Rayman quite a reach.

monitor

NEW SCREENS

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

NAME Zone of the Enders:
The 2nd Runner
PUBLISHER Konami
DEVELOPER Konami JPN
WEBSITE www.konamijpn.com
RELEASE March

PERCENTAGE
COMPLETE

70%



■ **OUT TO LAUNCH** All you can do is sit and watch as Ardjet releases multiple warheads against you. Get ready to duck.

■ **FORCE FIELD TRIP**
When Ardjet doesn't want you around, you'll know.

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

Break out the WD40 for the mecha masterpiece's sequel.

IS BATTERING ROBOTS STILL AS FUN? ZOE's second coming retains the same great gameplay as the original, with some very welcome enhancements. Dodging, parrying and decimating your opponents, while trussed up in a robot suit and performing special moves is still an intense experience. Now, however, the space, land and air-based fighting system has been altered so you can grab smaller foes to use as battering rams or projectiles to fling at their brethren. Think *WWE SmackDown!* meets *Battle of the Planets*.

WILL THE ACTION STILL BE ONE-ON-ONE? That's a negative. Another improvement in the game is that as well as simple mano-a-mano duels, you'll have to deal with up to 30 targets at once. And that's not all – in the first mission, improved weather effects mean you'll encounter a swarm of flying robots in the middle of a blizzard. The flyers are backed up by our old favourites, the Raptor units, but as soon as you start twirling one of the cannon fodder frames around your chrome dome the crowd soon disperses. Or blows up.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER ORBITAL FRAMES? We've only seen the Japanese version, so plot specifics are unclear, but characters so far include Ardjet, piloted by the feisty Ken (funny name for a girl) and the awesome Anubis unit, controlled by the twisted Nohman. Each fight is introduced in a brief cartoon sequence and, so far, the battles are suitably drawn out and punishing. It's often frustratingly hard to stay with your opponent. ZOE 2 is – get this – five times larger than the original, and lengthy story lines and cut-scenes are minimal. Now your character, Dingo, jumps straight into the Jehuty frame and the twisted metal fun kicks off. ☐ MW

opinion

PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER looks to be delivering just what we hoped for: an emphasis on action and style and not quite so many cut-scenes.

WHAT WE WANT

■ Bigger, better, cooler, faster orbital frames and less lock-on worries.

WHAT YOU WANT

■ Forum goer Dream Maker is keen but has said "Hope it has a bit more depth than the first".

WHAT THEY WANT

■ An epic sequel to inspire a whole new generation of robot warriors.

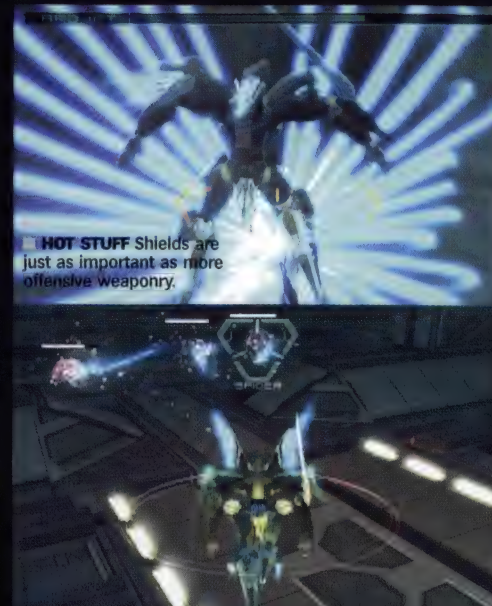
HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID ☐ TEPID ☐ WARM ☐ HOT ☒ BOILING ☐ MELTDOWN ☐



■ **SCRAP YARD** This interior is only one of many battle arenas.

バースト攻撃以外はカードで
ダメージを無効にできます



■ **HOT STUFF** Shields are just as important as more offensive weaponry.

■ **STRAIGHT SHOOTER** Improvements to the orbital frames' handling and targeting make combat far more enjoyable.



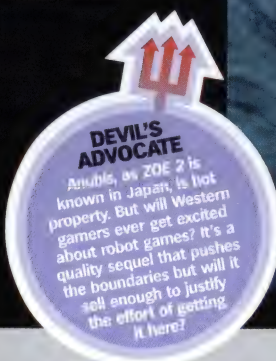
■ **KLUNK!** Some suits are, thankfully, more equal than others. Sorry pal.



■ **ON TARGET?** With the amount of enemies on screen you'd be forgiven for being a little scared.



■ **SEEING STARS** The special effects are often quite mesmerising.



DEVIL'S ADVOCATE
Available, as ZOE 2 is known in Japan, is not property. But will Western gamers ever get excited about robot games? It's a quality sequel that pushes the boundaries but will it sell enough to justify the effort of getting it here?



■ **SHE'S ELECTRIC** Each unit comes with its own special properties.

敵の攻撃をレーザーで撃ち落してください

PILOT EPISODE

Get to know the human characters behind the battling behemoths in Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner.



1. DINGO EGRET

An ice miner on Jupiter's Callisto moon, Dingo is the main character who discovers and pilots the Jehuty frame.



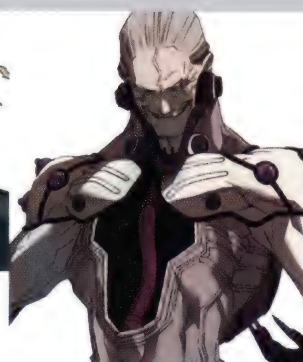
2. KEN MARINARIS

A frame runner for the evil BAHRAM, Ken pilots Ardjet and is commanded by Nohman to find the Jehuty frame.



3. LEO STENBUCK

The hero of the original game, Leo returns piloting a new mech – Vic Viper. His experience could be vital.



4. NOHMAN

Commander of Mars' military regime BAHRAM, power-hungry Nohman pilots the strongest Orbital Frame, Anubis



5. VIOLA

Another character reappearing from the original, Viola was presumed dead, but she's back and in control of Nephtls.

BROKEN SWORD

The Sleeping Dragon

NAME Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon
PUBLISHER TBC
DEVELOPER Revolution
WEBSITE www.brokensword3.com
RELEASE Spring 2003

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 50%

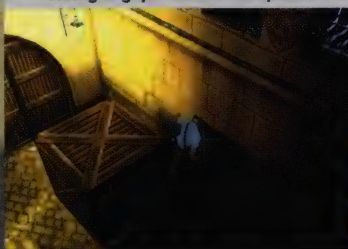


FROM THE START The first level finds Nico investigating the murder of a hacker in Paris.

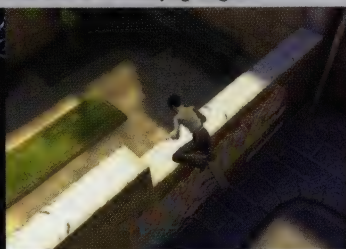


I GET AROUND

Getting to grips with the finer points of Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon.



Climb A staple of the action adventure, George boxes clever here.



Jump The ability to vault the wall is a good short cut and aids exploration.



Dangle Hanging from walls or traversing ledges can help George and Nico out of tight spots.

DID YOU KNOW?

Designer Charles Cecil says the central conspiracy of the game revolves around the mysterious Voynich manuscript, a real-life medieval book no-one can translate. Check out more at www.voyrich.nu

BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

Revolution reveals its game's classy art style and new control interface.

WHERE ARE THE NINJAS? Er, wrong game. *Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon* (also known as *Broken Sword 3*) is a rarity; it's a game that will reward quick thinkers, not button bashers, so no kung fu. Instead, think cutting edge adventure game with believable characters, plot and a cinematic art style. "It's an ambitious goal," says designer/creator Charles Cecil. "We want to create a game that's dynamic, yet cerebral. We're bringing the whole adventure game genre bang up to date."

SO WHAT'S NEW THEN? There are two key innovations. First is the move to a 3D environment, adding an exploration element to the gameplay which, in the days of point and click adventures, just consisted of, well, pointing and clicking. The other improvement is the game interface indicated by the four icons in the bottom right-hand corner of the screens you see here. Triggered by the four right-hand Dual Shock buttons, these will display the different available actions, whether it be legging it over a wall or throwing a stone to distract a patrolling guard. And as Cecil explains, there will always be plenty of options so players can make their own decisions on how to solve the game's puzzles. "Replayability is a very important element of this game," he says. "We want

the player to feel they are solving the game the way they want to, not the way we tell them to."

WHAT'S THE STORY? Well, following on from its two successful predecessors, this third instalment pitches heroic duo George Stobbard and Nico Collard into a conspiracy theory that threatens the world. And it's based on historical references of the extinction events that occurred on Earth 10,000 years ago. □ JJ

opinion

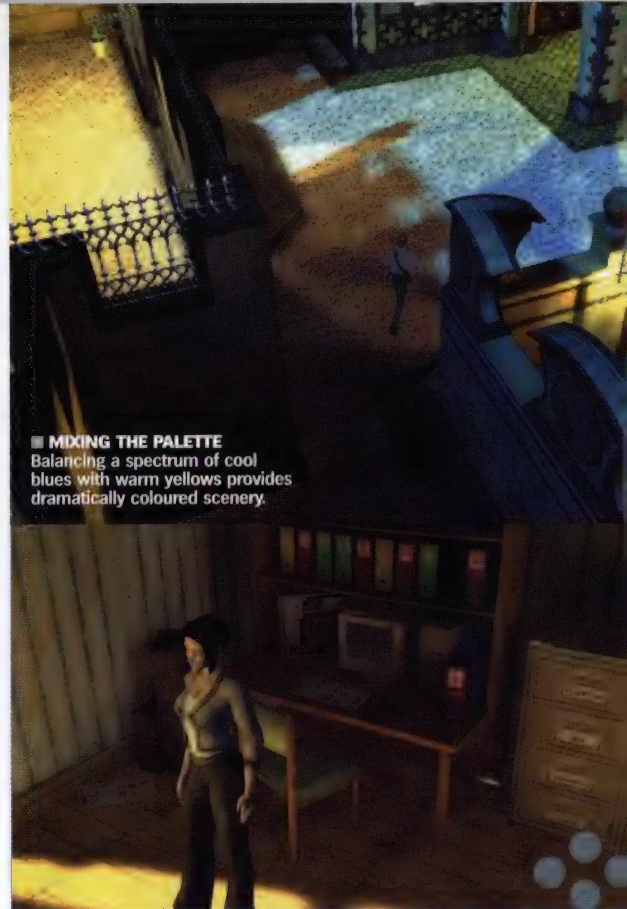
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON may revitalise the tired adventure genre if it can deliver on the promise of mixing interactive, emotional storytelling with beautiful graphics and cinematic framing.

WHAT WE WANT	WHAT YOU WANT	WHAT THEY WANT
■ Revolution to prove computer games can be more than racing, jumping and shooting.	■ Forum regular RVD has been asking for info on the game. Ask and thou shalt receive.	■ To reinvent the adventure for a new audience by mixing an intelligent story with immersive 3D.

HOT OR NOT?

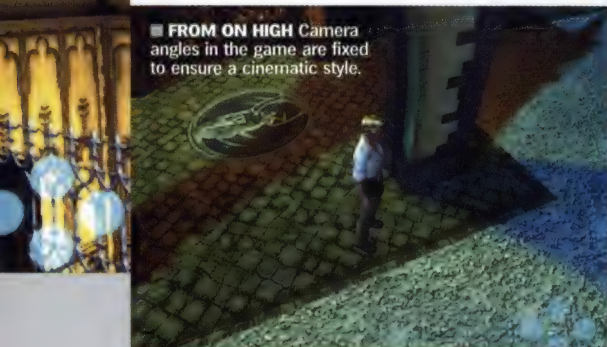
FRIGID TEPID WARM HOT BOILING MELTDOWN



MIXING THE PALETTE Balancing a spectrum of cool blues with warm yellows provides dramatically coloured scenery.



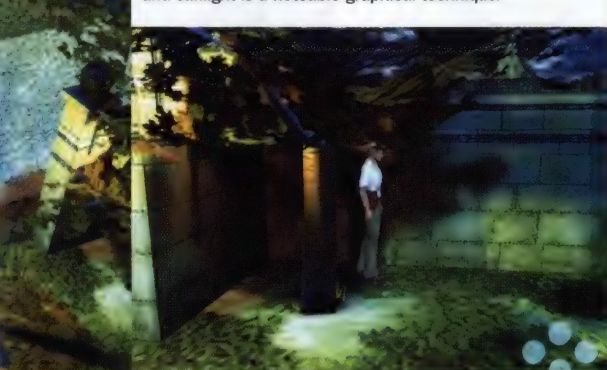
FINGER-PICKING GOOD The four buttons in the lower right-hand corner of the screen provide the player with context-specific action options.



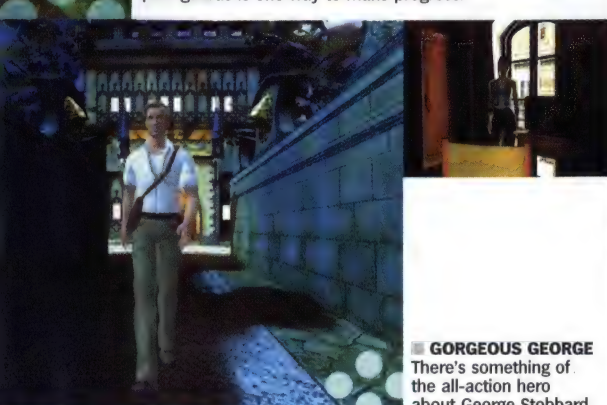
FROM ON HIGH Camera angles in the game are fixed to ensure a cinematic style.



OVER-EXPOSED High contrast between deep shadows and sunlight is a notable graphical technique.



IN THE SHADE Hiding in the shadows and sneaking past guards is one way to make progress.



GORGEOUS GEORGE There's something of the all-action hero about George Stobard.



SPACE CHANNEL 5 V.2

Shake your funky booty to save Earth from certain doom!

WHAT'S ON CHANNEL 5? Without a doubt one of the most bizarre games ever to grace the PS2 was Space Channel 5. It featured a plot that was more camp than many rows of tents in which aliens attempt to enslave humanity... using dance as a weapon. Well Sega and UGA have seen fit to give this title the sequel treatment, so what's different this time around? Well so far not much really. Like the original you play the role of Ulala: The sexy reporter vixen who always has a spring in her step and an eye on her ratings. Like the original you defeat aliens and rescue hypnotised dancing humans in what essentially amounts to a game of 'Monkey see monkey do' with a dance beat. This time around Space Michael is the producer of the show, in a game with fully rendered backgrounds rather than the streaming video backgrounds found in the previous game.

IS THIS A REPEAT OR A NEW EPISODE? The sequel does feature some neat new characters like rival reporter Pudding. There are sequences where you and Pudding must face off with electric guitars and various other instruments, including a battle of the bands sequence that takes this kooky title to even more twisted levels. The original was one of those games people either loved or hated and the sequel, being almost exactly the same game at this point in development, is not going to change many minds. A small two player option (co-operative, no less) and some unlockable secrets notwithstanding, Space Channel 5 v.2 is more extension than evolution of the original product, which is not a bad thing. After all feeling like a dancer in an Austin Powers opening credit sequence does have a certain goofy charm. **AO**

opinion

PlayStation 2

SPACE CHANNEL 5 is one of the campiest, weirdest games ever made. The real question, does it need a sequel? We'll wait for the completed product and see.

WHAT WE WANT

More variety in the gameplay and a break from the 'on rails' scenario.

WHAT YOU WANT

Without a word on the forums, we have no idea what you want this game. Speculate away folks.

WHAT THEY WANT

To bypass its mainly cult audience and get more mainstream recognition with their very accessible game.

HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID

TEPID

WARM

HOT

BOILING

MELTDOWN

monitor

HANDS-ON

NAME

Space Channel 5 v.2

PUBLISHER

SEGA

DEVELOPER

UGA

WEB SITE

www.u-ga.com/jp/ company/ profile_eng.html

RELEASE

February

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%



ZERO-G BONDAGE? Please don't tell us the aim is to free her...



NOT EUROPEAN The lack of armpit hair is a dead giveaway.



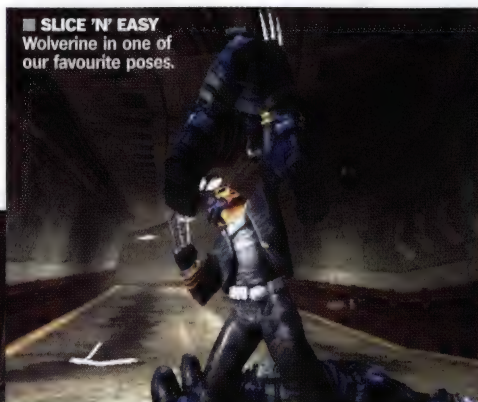


NAME X-Men: Wolverine's Revenge
PUBLISHER Activision
DEVELOPER Genepool Software
WEB SITE www.activision.com
RELEASE March - May

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

65%

■ **SLICE 'N' EASY**
Wolverine in one of our favourite poses.



■ **MAKING SENSE** No, he's not been on the grog. Wolvy's super sense mode lets him sneak up on unsuspecting adversaries.

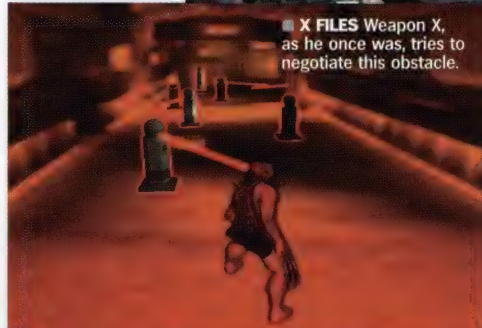


WHAT'S THE STORY?

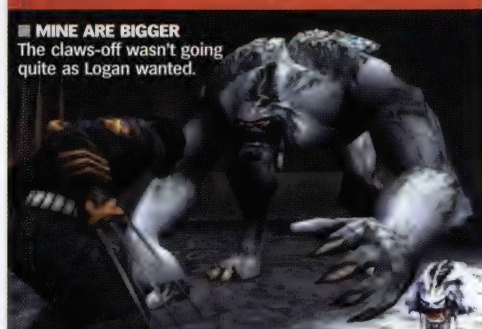
Wolverine has been infected with a virus by Department H that's eating him from the inside out. He's got 48 hours to find the scientists who contaminated him and find a cure. He must delve into his murky military past and encounter plenty of old 'friends' along the way.



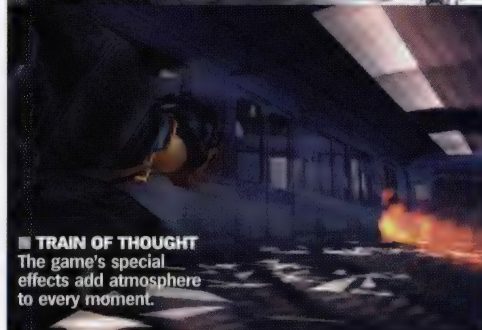
■ **X FILES** Weapon X, as he once was, tries to negotiate this obstacle.



■ **MINE ARE BIGGER**
The claws-off wasn't going quite as Logan wanted.



■ **TRAIN OF THOUGHT**
The game's special effects add atmosphere to every moment.



■ **GET THE POINT?** Not one of the flashiest moves, but pretty effective.



X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Brand new screens of the hairy X-Man's adamantium adventures.

HOW'S THE GAME LOOKING? Pretty sharp, as you can see from these screens. The art direction on the project is full of dark charisma, just like the Wolvestor himself. As in the movie, Genepool has ditched the bright lycra strides that made the original comic incarnation so cool and has instead gone with a more 'leather and violence' approach. You'll also get to see him incarnated as Weapon X, the military experiment that gave him those tenacious talons. It looks like he's not alone either - check out those night-visioned troopers and other experimental beings. He'll have to watch himself.

WHAT'S WITH THE HEAT HAZE? Ah, you mean the Sense mode. Wolvy's skills on the movie screen may look like nothing more than sniffing, but in the game his sensory perception will be brought to life as he stealthily stalks his prey. See how the individuals become distinct from the background and cel-shading heightens the emotional content of the moment. Even the footsteps of the soldier he's stalking are highlighted to help you track them down.

HE'S A BIT OF A BRAWLER THEN... Oh yes, just take a squiz at the fight screens. Genepool seems to have

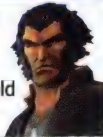
really brought to life the acrobatic and brutal way Wolverine goes to work. Stabbing and slashing claws, as well as wrestling and martial arts moves, combine to produce a dazzling, but gore-free Fight mode. The game's a third-person adventure, but with all of your favourite foes including Juggernaut and Sabretooth in there, it'll doubtless be the combat that will make or break this for you. □ MW

opinion

PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

X-MEN WOLVERINE'S REVENGE looks to be one of the few comic book games to excel on PS2. By concentrating on gameplay and atmosphere this game could slice and dice the opposition.



WHAT WE WANT

■ A special mode where you get to play in yellow lycra - just for a bit.

WHAT YOU WANT

■ WarBlade from the forums says "This is gonna be sick, I love Wolverine!" Kinky.

WHAT THEY WANT

■ An X-Men game that breaks the mould (and that performs better than Next Dimension).

HOT OR NOT?

FRIGID TEPID WARM **HOT** BOILING MELTDOWN



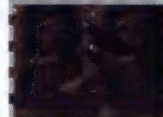
■ **TREETOP TUSSE**
Our protagonist Rau
readily takes to the trees.

JUST LIKE THAT CROW MOVIE!

By pressing the button you can switch perspectives between Rau and his pet hawk Kuzo. Kuzo can fly to specific locations in each level, and from where he perches you can use him to scout the area so you can plan Rau's attack. The bad you can't just swoop down and peck their eyes out, but that would probably kill the stealth element!

monitor

HANDS-ON



NAME The Mark of Kri
PUBLISHER SCE
DEVELOPER San Diego Studios
WEB SITE www.scee.com
RELEASE February

PERCENTAGE
COMPLETE

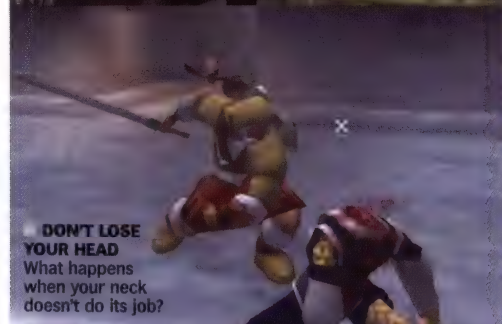
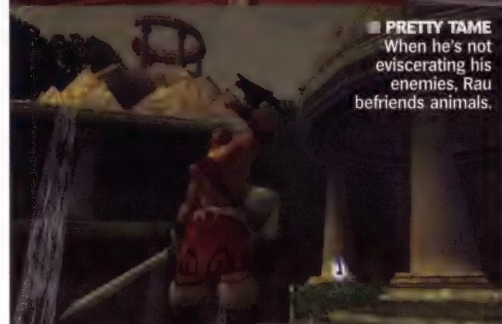
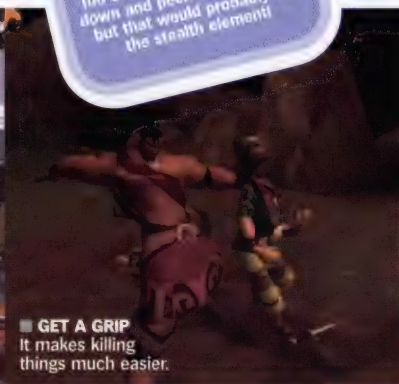
90%



■ **PRETTY TAME**
When he's not
viscerating his
enemies, Rau
befriends animals.



■ **GET A GRIP**
It makes killing
things much easier.



■ **DON'T LOSE
YOUR HEAD**
What happens
when your neck
doesn't do its job?



THE MARK OF KRI

Conan the Barbarian goes to Disneyland... interested?

THE MARK OF WHO? The game takes place in a fictional world heavily inspired by Maori/Polynesian cultures. Dark forces are out to unite the six pieces of the Mark of Kri which will consequently destroy the earth, and it is up to the powerful warrior Rau to stop them. Rau is aided in his plight to overcome evil by his feathered companion Kuzo the hawk, who has the ability to activate out-of-reach switches and fly on ahead to see what danger awaits Rau. *The Mark of Kri* uniquely juxtaposes frequent acts of violence with cartoon-ish imagery (it's no surprise to find that the developers recruited ex-Disney artists). A nice feature of the presentation is the way the pencil-sketched cut scenes between levels blend seamlessly into the action itself, a la EA's *LOTR: The Two Towers*.

DOES THE DISNEY FACTOR MAKE IT LIKE KINGDOM HEARTS? Not at all. *The Mark of Kri* is first and foremost a beat-'em-up, but with a large stealth element thrown into the mix. Rau can target up to three enemies at once and hack away at them with his sword, or he can stealth his weapons and creep up behind them to trigger some particularly gruesome stealth kills. *OPS2* particularly enjoyed grabbing an unsuspecting foe from behind and nailing them to the wall with our sword. Other weapons available to Rau include a rather brutish axe and the stylish bow and arrow, which can be used to snipe enemies from afar. Of course some enemies wear armour impervious to arrows, so in this case you may have to shoot a wild boar whose dying squeals will divert enemies while you creep up behind them to slit their throats.

SO THE COMBAT IS JUST BUTTON MASHING?

Not entirely, in fact, there's some innovation here. When you come upon a group of enemies you point to the ones you want to attack with the right analogue stick. When an enemy is selected they are assigned one of the three buttons , , or , and attacking each enemy is dependant on pressing the corresponding button. The combat system works surprisingly well and although button mashing might do the trick earlier on in the game, by the later levels players will have to master a long list of combo attacks to survive. If you get really good you'll be able to counter an enemy's attack and stab them in the heart with their own dagger! ☐ TO

opinion

PlayStation 2

THE MARK OF KRI clearly shows that San Diego Studios are out to re-invent the beat-'em-up genre. With the game's combination of a decent combat system, striking animation and a strong stealth element, they might just do it.

WHAT WE WANT

■ Levels that are a bit less linear and give you more ways to approach them with larger areas to explore.

WHAT YOU WANT

■ Forum poster prototype z has a blood lust for "gore, all set within a cute Disney-esque world".

WHAT THEY WANT

■ To present a beat-'em-up that is equal parts brain and brawn.

HOT OR NOT?

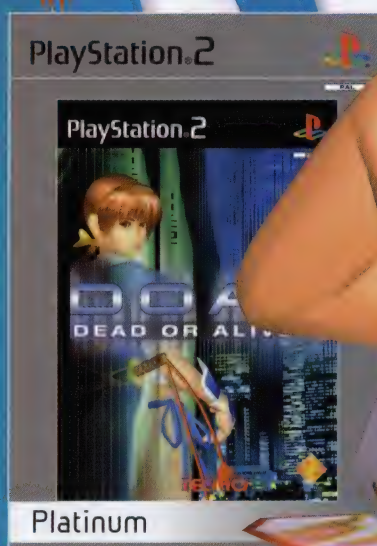
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PlayStation®2

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HE GOT GAME!

ZENO COLACO

We talk to the man who has helped create more games than any of us have even played!

How would you describe your role at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe?

The role I have is basically the same as my title suggests, Vice President of Publisher and Developer Relations. It really means looking at what everyone is publishing or developing for the console, apart from the first party umbrella – so basically any developer that's looking to develop on PSone or PlayStation 2.

What are some of the more interesting titles and developers that you've overseen or been involved in?

It's quite a difficult question because there are so many. I think that in recent times the most interesting thing was working with Free Radical Design, who've basically come as a new developer and worked very closely with us. They were one of the first developers that we worked with when PS2 prototype kits were available. They helped us as well as we helped them to bring the title to market. And I think that they dispelled in other ways some of the myths of PS2 development because they had no history of it and they approached it from a very, very clean base. They had *TimeSplitters* and their own critical acclaim for the launch in the first year, and they were just behind the launch of the actual machine. So I think that's the most interesting recent

experience I have had working with a developer. We continue to have a good relationship with them.

Do you offer any suggestions on specific titles? What exactly is your interaction with each project?

It's on several levels. If the publisher decides they want to do the game on PlayStation 2, and can we help in terms of maximising that product, that approach allows them to get the most out of the machine. It may become a showcase title for us, so we're able to work with our own internal marketing for promoting that game within our own marketing strategies. From a development side and probably a more technology side you have developers that are looking for guidance in terms of "what should we do in the game?" We have an evaluation team which is completely independent of any other group, where at any time through the process, they can choose to come in. These guys are obviously quite critical of the products, but in a very positive way, because ultimately they've got no bones to pick about liking or disliking something. It's about saying this is what they actually think, and it's up to the developer to make a decision about whether they want to take that advice and heed it. It doesn't affect in any way the developer or publisher's ability to publish that game. It's really a case of maximising the potential.

Do developers come to you with game concepts?

All licensed developers are free to roam around inside our development environment. We don't try to restrict the creativity of what they want to do. What we try to encourage the concepts that are given to us, so we can give feedback at an early stage, but as I said that doesn't stop the product ever coming to market.

You never say "I don't think we should publish that"?

We do have fields of uses, which is like "is it a game?" and does it fall into the categories of normal genres. We believe in a philosophy that was kickstarted in the beginning and maintained through to today. We let the consumer decide the way we should go. Some of the more, shall we say, "open" developers do look for us to give them the feedback on their concept. Because you can do a product and forget about the fact that there is a big bad commercial world out there. We had a previous position of sometimes saying "this genre is very crowded" or "these are the standard features that you should be looking at". If a developer is coming to us for the first time, yes, we must insist on a concept. We're always trying to encourage that we see concepts on every product we can because ultimately something like *Grand Theft Auto*, which Rockstar was kind enough to invite us to have some feedback on, meant that we saw very early that it would be a great product, and even though it carried the name of *Grand Theft Auto 3* it was far from being just a sequel. We were really excited, to the extent that

we worked very closely with Rockstar and Take 2 to make it what it is today, the number one game on PlayStation 2.

If an individual has a concept for a game, is there anywhere they can take it?

I think we have to be realistic with life nowadays. The games industry, in development terms, has moved on from a few people coding, the stereotype in their bedroom, making themselves millionaires at the age of 20. Reality says that you've got to try. You can have a script, if you're a writer, which you might want to take to a developer, and if that's part of a concept, you can take that another stage, but the games industry has gotten far more professional, and you do need to show due diligence in the way this is put together. I mean I've had the extreme of a letter saying "I want to write a game. I've got a game concept." People can actually take their interest in this area forward without a huge investment. For less than \$1,000 AUD you can get a Linux based PlayStation 2 system, which is really a cut down version of the professional T-10000 tools, which allows people to take their idea to the next stage.

Can you talk about any of the games that you're working on at the moment?

Well I think I'll take a bit of a broad step; we've got probably 200 active developers in the PAL region, which is a massive roster. We are also complemented by what's happening in America and what's happening in Japan. There's nothing specific that I'd like to talk about because there are so many.

"THE MOST INTERESTING THING WAS WORKING WITH FREE RADICAL DESIGN"

CURRICULUM VITAE

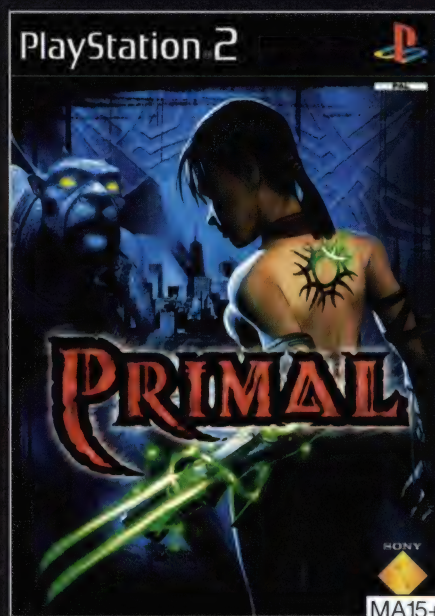
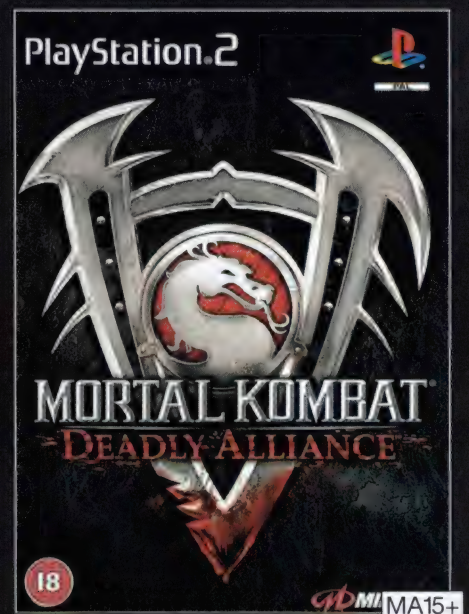
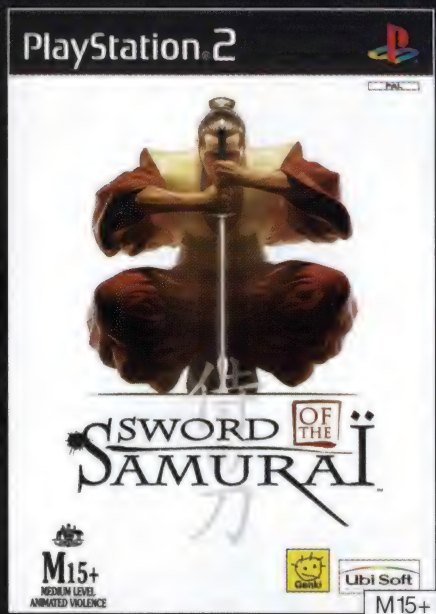
Name: Zeno Colaco
Job title: Vice-President, Publisher and Developer Relations
Nationality: English

Gameography:
My involvement has always been working with developers and publishers on a breath of issues and products, from game concept to street rather than specific titles. It's been great to work closely with developers and publishers like Core Design and Free Radical Design on cutting edge titles such as *Tomb Raider* and *TimeSplitters* and RockStar on the *Grand Theft Auto* series.

Hobbies:
Getting out with my mates on the golf course - fully laden with beers in the bag!
Favourite director: Martin Scorsese
Favourite authors: Louis de Bernieres, Arthur Miller
Favourite bands: The Rolling Stones, The Verve, Kate Bush, Stevie Wonder, Alcia Keys

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AGDC

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO CODE, WE SALUTE YOU

The Australian games development industry is steaming ahead, and many projects are PS2 bound. Jason Hill reports from the Australian Game Developers Conference.

The Australian games development industry is poised for unprecedented growth. Adam Lancman, President of the Games Development Association of Australia (GDAA), believes the industry could grow from 600 employees to over 2000 in the next few years.

"The industry has expanded to a national one," Mr Lancman said. People are starting to notice that the industry exists and there is the potential for significant growth. The past year has shown to the world that Australian developers are talented, innovative and masterful in the progress of making games for the international market."

In early December the industry descended on Melbourne for the fourth annual Australian Game Developers Conference (AGDC). Over 600 people attended the three-day conference. It's Australia's leading forum where developers gather to discuss the latest in cutting edge technology and the changing face of the industry.

The conference featured keynote speakers, technical panels and tutorials covering all aspects of game production including graphics, audio, programming, game design and business development.

Speakers included technical specialists from Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, Dr Ray Muzyka, Co-Executive producer of *Neverwinter Nights*, and Lars Gustavsson, Producer of *Battlefield 1942*. Sony sessions included an introduction to the PS2 hardware, workshops on character animation, programming optimisation, PS2 performance analysis and online gaming.



Australia's games industry began with the founding of Beam Software in 1980, which is now Australia's largest developer and known as Infogrames Melbourne House. There are over 40 other developers across the country, including Torus, Auran, Evolution, Micro Forte, Krome, Tantalus, Ratbag, Irrational, Blue Tongue, Bullant and IR Gurus. Over a dozen are working on new PS2 titles.

John De Margheriti, the Executive Chairman of the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, said it was a very exciting time for Australian developers. "Our industry is fast becoming known for its fresh approach to game development, its quality of development and ability to develop within budget on time. Australians have strong work ethics and their creative flair is winning across the world, both in the games and film industry. One might say that we have finally been discovered."

Senator Richard Alston, Minister for Information

Technology, attended the conference and said the Australian games industry had an annual turnover of \$110 million. He said the Federal Government had made \$160 million available for grants to help new software companies get off the ground.

Victoria's Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Marsha Thomson, said the AGDC was "vitally important for our thriving games industry as a forum to exchange ideas and forge business opportunities both locally and internationally." Ms Thomson said the Victorian Government had a lot of faith in what the industry could produce by way of jobs and exports. "Each new game developed can see up to \$3 million invested in Victoria, and can create up to 30 new jobs. Here in Australia over a million dollars is being spent every day on computer games."

Victoria is home to half of Australia's game



developers and there have been over 200 titles developed in the state. The Victorian government recently paid \$250,000 for a Sony scheme to loan fledgling developers free PlayStation2 Development Kits.

Adam Lancman said the GDAA was responsible for coming up with the idea for the scheme, the first of its kind in the world. "Normally a start up would not qualify to get access to a full development kit, there are very strict criteria." He said the GDAA was hoping to expand the program if they can obtain funding from other State Governments.

The AGDC also featured an expo with stands from Australian and international game hardware and software companies, educational institutions and game development companies. Sony's stand was particularly popular, with demonstrations of the benefits of the PlayStation2 Performance Analyser.

David Carter, Engineer with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's R&D Division, was one of a six-man team to attend the AGDC from the UK. "We're showing some of the new software we've got for the Performance Analyser," he said. "Showing to developers and students alike what Sony has to help them create titles of Triple A quality."



John De Margheriti - The man behind the first AGDC, and veteran game developers Micro Fortre.



Mr Carter said he had also been touring game studios around the country offering advice and showing the benefits of the Performance Analyser. He was very impressed by the talent he had seen. "What I've seen so far has been really good. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before one of these companies in Australia makes a Triple A title for PS2. We're looking at code, running it through the PA, seeing where things are breaking and trying to help them out. It's great for tracking down things when you don't quite understand why something is going wrong. The PA really gives you the opportunity to see what your code is doing in run-time."

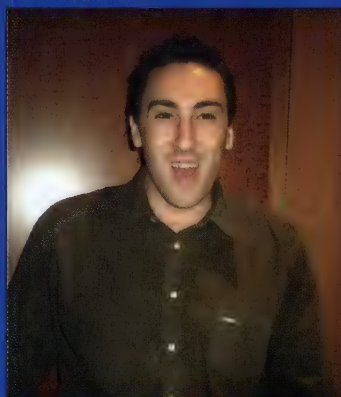
Mr Carter said the scheme to allow new developers access to PS2 Development Kits was a major boon for the industry. "To become a PS2 developer there's a lot to get through, there's certain criteria that need to be fulfilled. With the Game Developer Association, smaller developers can loan dev kits for six months, get a demo going and take it to publishers. It really helps the teams to produce something quickly on exactly the same kits that they would be working on in a larger developer like EA or something. The more people that work on PS2, the better it is for all of us."

Michael Werle, a Senior Engineer with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's Technology Group, gave a session about Sony's online plans and how to develop an online multiplayer PS2 title. He said work on the network for PAL territories like Australia was progressing well.



TANTALUS INTERACTIVE

Tom Crago, CEO



Can you give us a brief background of the company?

Tantalus was founded in 1994 and has released around fifteen titles. We started up doing Saturn and PlayStation versions of coin-op titles, and were lucky enough to work with the likes of Sega Japan and Psygnosis. *Manxx TT Superbike* was an early success, and a bunch of other fairly high profile conversions followed. We started doing original titles a few years ago, and that of course is where we're hoping to make a name for ourselves. We've released a couple of equestrian games on PlayStation, and have had recent success on the GameBoy Advance.

How many staff do you currently have?

Twenty-seven full time staff.

Congratulations on nabbing one of the PlayStation2 Developers Kits. What does it mean for Tantalus?

Well it's great because it means we get a chance to develop an original title in-house. We're putting together a demo which we'll show publishers in the new year. If it all goes well, we might have the opportunity to sign an original game and keep control of the intellectual property.

You're working on *Tread Marks* for PS2 at the moment. What can you tell us about it?

It is still very early days, but *Tread Marks* has its origins in a cult PC title of the same name, released a few years ago. Taking this as our inspiration, we're creating a tank shoot-'em-up with real-time deformable terrain. There will be big arenas, big guns, and a whole lot of action. We're also working hard on multi-player.

You worked on the PS2 version of *Space Race* for Infogrames. What was your role in its development?

We were responsible for the development of this game on PS2. Infogrames did the original DreamCast title, to which we added a bunch of new tracks, new characters and an entirely new interface. It served to get us up

to speed on the PlayStation2, something I'm very glad for. It's usually in their second or third title that developers really come to grips with the strange beast that is the PS2. So it's great to have a title already under our belt.

How important is the Australian Game Developers Conference for you and your team?

It's very important because it is a showcase for the Australian games industry. We'd all like to see this country become a real hub for game development, and the more international publishers and media that we get down here the better. Usually they're sold as soon as they've witnessed first hand what a vibrant scene we have here in Australia. AGDC is also a great opportunity for our developers to meet their peers from other studios, and to mix and socialise in what is a really fun few days.

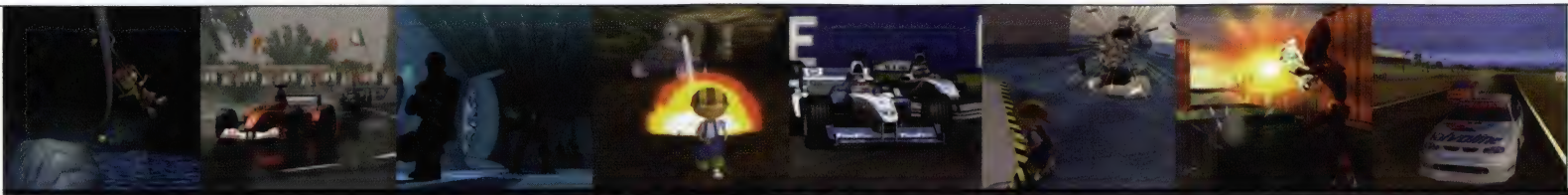
Do all your staff take time out to attend?

We offer all our staff the opportunity to attend, and this year most have taken us up on that offer.

What do you expect to learn from the Sony sessions?

We'll learn a great deal from the Sony sessions. We have a fantastic relationship with Sony, and have two of their visiting teams coming to see our work here at the studio. I always jump at the opportunity to meet these people. They live and breathe PlayStation, and it's great that they can take the time to help developers get the best out of the machine. We're going to show them our progress on *Tread Marks*, and hope to receive some feedback on how best to optimise our code to squeeze the most out of the PS2. ■





BULLANT STUDIOS

Ross Symons, CEO



Can you give us a brief background of the company?

Bullant Studios was formed about two years ago, however, its founders have been writing games, books, magazine articles and the like since the early eighties. It is the coming together of the very controlled business-like aspects of commercial software development and the fun and excitement of the games industry. So far Bullant Studios has developed products for wireless, interactive television, and now the PlayStation 2.

How many staff do you currently have?

We have fourteen staff members working directly on Console development including the PlayStation 2. We find that there is a ratio of two-thirds artists to one-third programmers.

Congratulations on nabbing one of the Playstation2 Developers Kits. What does it mean for Bullant?

The loan of the two development kits from the GDA and support from Sony has definitely helped us greatly. It has meant development that may have not been undertaken for at least another few months is now finished. More importantly, it has allowed the opportunity for two extra team members to join us and for them to have some months of development experience on the PlayStation2 platform under their belts.

Can you tell us what you are currently working on for PS2?

We are working on a game that has the working title *Tick Tock Boom*, which is a platform/adventure based game show. It is currently at the stage of a playable demonstration version and we are now on the road with it showing it off to publishers. So far the response has been extremely positive.

How important is the Australian Game Developers Conference for you and your team?

The AGDC is a blast! We use it as a break for the entire team and a chance to catch

up with everyone else in the industry. We also use the time at the conference to reflect on the previous year and also plan for the year ahead.

Do all your staff take time out to attend?

We give all staff the opportunity to attend, and most have taken the opportunity. It enables them to catch up on changes in the industry and to perhaps learn some tips from the brightest and best speakers available.

What do you expect to learn from the Sony sessions at the conference?

As our team have some understanding of the PlayStation 2 development system, and indeed have product currently under development, we are focussing on the finer points. We hope to gain an understanding of how to analyse the performance of our code and how to tune our systems so as to drive the PlayStation2 to its limits. ■



"PAL territories have just commenced closed trials, and we'll begin public trials in the next few months, aiming to increase the number of players to over 1,000 so we'll be ready for our launch later in the year."

Mr Werle said work was underway to try and overcome the problem of download limits imposed by Internet Service Providers. "Australia's got a bunch of hidden challenges. One of the options we're investigating with telco partners is setting up a concept of a 'free garden' for the service, so that downloads taken from the free gardens don't actually count towards downloads for customers.

"The other way to resolve it is by peer-to-peer games where the traffic actually runs between players are not to servers which are often overseas. Importing data from overseas is one of the major costs to Australian telcos."

Mr Werle said launch titles would probably include *SOCOM*, *Hardware*, *Twisted Metal Black* and *Frequency*. The headset for chatting to other players would also be available. Mr Werle said many lessons had been learned from the US launch, which would help ensure network gaming would be successful over here.

John De Margheriti helped pioneer the first AGDC after starting a similar conference in the US in the early '80s. Mr De Margheriti said he felt the Australian industry needed an event to help it to grow. "The benefit it brings to all developers is incalculable," he said.

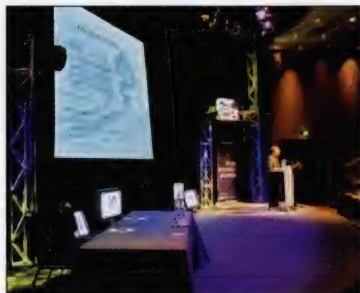
"It's a time for interaction with peers, learning and celebrating our way of life. It's an expression of passion that all Australia developers share for our industry and craft, a passion that is reflected in the type of games we all create. The AGDC helps Australian companies create an internal buzz, a feeling of belonging."

Mr De Margheriti said Sony's involvement in the conference showed it was "very much

committed to the Australian game development scene. Never to be outdone, they are also throwing a huge party."

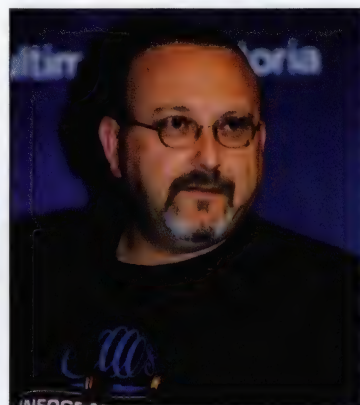
There was universal agreement at the conference about the potential for the Australian industry. "It's huge," said Mr De Margheriti. "Only four years ago I predicted that the Australian games industry would become an important game development hub. Back then the whole notion of an Australian games industry did not exist and most of the handful of developers did not know much about each other. Look at the industry now. There are over 40 developers.

Some 12 developers are multi-million

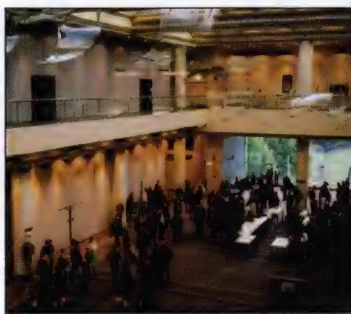


dollar outfits who are making leading edge console games. My belief is that over a ten year period, the total revenue of the Australian games development industry will be worth over \$1 billion. If you take into consideration the total Australian games industry, that is games sold and developed in Australia, it's likely to be worth over \$5 Billion in the next 10 years."

Some of the participants at the AGDC were students hoping to get their big break in the industry or increase their skills and



Adam Lancman - President of the Games Development Association of Australia.



PLAYSTATION 2 - DEVELOPMENTS DOWN UNDER

PlayStation2 titles developed in Australia include *Grand Prix Challenge*, *Men in Black II*, *Rocket Power Beach Bandits*, *World of Outlaws: Sprintcars*, *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger*, *Sunny Garcia Surfing*, *Looney Tunes Space Race* and *AFL Live 2003*. Titles in development include *Tread Marks*, *Ice Nine*, *Rugby League*, *Tick Tock Boom*, *Spotswood* and *Eric, Ikon* and *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2*.





knowledge. Fortunately, the Australian industry is no longer losing most of its talented programmers, artists and game designers to overseas developers. "We are finally retaining our talent in Australia," said Mr De Margheriti. "However, we are still hiring experienced talent that cannot be found here from overseas. It will take a few more years yet before that situation will be neutralised. It's simply due to a lack of 5-10 year experienced developers that can be easily hired from Australia without having to head-hunt them out of an Australian games company."

Looking at how Australia has muscled into the movie industry with films such as *The Matrix* and *Star Wars: Episode II* being shot on our sunny shores, is it overly optimistic for us to expect to see a true blockbuster game come out of Australia? We think not. Both the fact that running a development company out here is more economically viable than in other countries, plus the clear signs of promising progression this year's AGDC has shown suggest that it's matter of 'when' rather than 'if'.



MAKE YOUR OWN GAMES

Budding developers interested in getting hands-on experience with the PlayStation 2 hardware can buy a Linux PS2 kit for an extremely reasonable \$499.

Sarah Ewen, Linux Engineer for Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, attended the AGDC to highlight the benefits of the scheme. "For the first time it's opening up the PS2 to anyone," Ms Ewen said. "You can take advantage of all the hardware that's in there. We've included everything you need."

Budding programmers don't get maximum performance from the machine because Linux is running as well as their own code, but you do get almost all the PS2 manuals that commercial game developers receive.

"And the way you build up your code is very similar, you'll learn a lot about the hardware," Ms Ewen said. "In such a competitive industry, it's a great foot in the door, especially being so portable. You can just walk up in an interview and say 'This is what I did.'"

"There are two main groups using the kit. Linux enthusiasts who want to run Linux on any interesting architecture, and amateur game developers, people who are interested in writing games and graphics demos."

Ms Ewen said programming for PS2 was very different to PC. "There's a lot of pain involved if you start with a PC version of a game and port it to PS2 because the PS2 architecture is almost the exact

opposite of a PC. The PC is designed to run all sorts of generic applications, but with PS2 you know you're going to be doing 3D graphics, high performance, real-time."

The kit includes a 40Gb hard disc drive, Ethernet Network Adaptor, USB keyboard and mouse, monitor cable, Linux for PlayStation 2 discs and technical documentation.

Sony ran a similar scheme for the original PlayStation, with Net Yaroze kits available around the world. But Net Yaroze kits were expensive, weren't available to everyone and were limited by the libraries supplied with the kit.

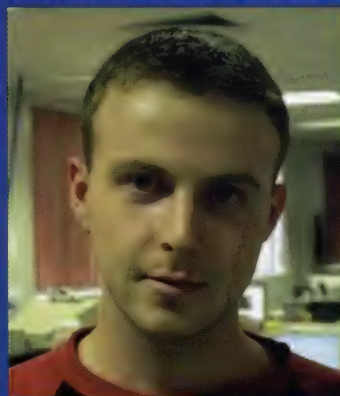
Currently there are over 150 kits being used in Australia, but Sony is hoping the numbers will grow. There is already a vibrant worldwide community swapping code and ideas at www.playstation2-linux.com.

For more details about purchasing a Linux PS2 kit call 1300 365 911.



TORUS GAMES

Kevin McIntosh, Producer of *Ice Nine*



Can you give us a brief background of the company?

Torus Games started in 1994 by working on their own original title. When that didn't get picked up straight away, Torus took on jobs from publisher predominantly on the GameBoy. This expanded onto PlayStation and PC platforms as well in the form of *Killing Time*, *Dick Johnson's V8 Challenge* and *Carmageddon: TDR 2000*. Torus continued to grow and had some great hits on GameBoy Color before moving to GameBoy Advance and PS2. This year alone has seen titles such as *Space Invaders*, *Duke Nukem*, *Doom II*, *Le Mans 24 Hours*, *Backyard Football*, *Minority Report* and *The Invincible Iron Man*.

How many staff do you currently have?

We currently have over 70 staff and one of the lowest turnover rates that we know of in a games company.

What can you tell us about the PS2 title you're currently working on?

The game's title is *Ice Nine* and will be officially announced shortly from BAM Entertainment. The title started with the name *The Farm*, based on a movie that was to be released starring Al Pacino. The title of the movie changed to *The Recruit*. The strength of the game and story impressed the publisher so much that they've now taken it upon themselves to turn it into an original product, based on the movie. We have all but finished the title on GBA, but that will be released when *Ice Nine* PS2 hits the shelves next June.

It's your first PS2 title, how difficult has it been moving to the PS2 from being primarily focused on handhelds?

Torus has had the reputation of being a handheld developer, but internally we've nearly always had just as many people working on high end as we have handheld. Last year when the GBA kicked off, we really put a lot of effort behind that, but this year, most of the company has been focused on the console side of the business. The image comes from the amount of titles we release

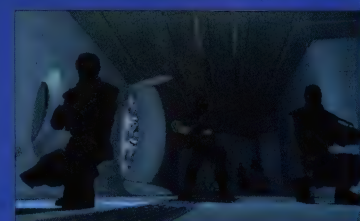
on GBA as opposed to high-end platforms, but we can deliver three to four GBA titles to a high-end game because of our technology. It was always going to be a hurdle to catch up with the rest of the market on PS2 after not completing a title on that platform, which is why we licensed the Renderware package. There have been some difficulties, but nothing more than the usual teething problems that someone encounters when moving onto a new platform.

How important is the Australian Game Developers Conference for you and your team?

Torus has been a big contributor to the event as it's continued to grow. We sent a team of 20 to the first AGDC in Sydney, and have since held booths, delivered talks and sponsored events at the show. It's great to see the Australian industry together and its growth as AGDC gets bigger every year. This year, because of the timing of our products and titles, E3 has to be our main focus in the next six months in terms of trade shows. The AGDC does well to bring a sense of togetherness to the industry here, though it does not make great sense to invest in sending the whole team as there is little payback in a business sense.

What do you expect to learn from the Sony sessions at the conference?

We are hoping to get some tips on using the PS2, new techniques and technology to better our performance and what Sony expects from a PS2 title. Of course, we'll ask them about the PS3 as well which they can deny. Shortly after AGDC, the PS2 guys will be visiting our offices to go through a Performance Analyser, so that will benefit the team having a personal visit. ■



WORDS: KEITH STUART, LEE HART/ILLUSTRATIONS: CHINA MIKE

WELCOME TO 2003



■ **GET BUSY!** And you thought 2002 was a good year for games. Wait till you get a load of 2003.

Plug in, boot up and get ready for a rollercoaster ride into the future of gaming on PS2. 2003's going to be the best year yet!



Whoever said "the future's not ours to see" didn't reckon on OPS2. The door has just swing shut on 2002 and already 2003 is jam-packed with quality game releases, month after month after month... And we just couldn't wait to let you know what's around the corner and on its way to a PS2 near you. We've buffed up our crystal ball and over these 12 pages you too will see why 2003 is going to be the best year for PS2 games yet. Knowing the beast that is the games industry, some of the awesome titles that mark the hot spots on 2003's gaming calendar will arrive late and some will sneak through earlier. Either way, you're in for an amazing year of gaming. Did someone say broadband? Excited? You will be...



GOOD TO GLOW
Primal's gorgeous lighting effects have to be seen to be believed.

PRIMAL (Studio Cambridge/SCEE)

Rescuing the fantasy realm from the crusty wizard brigade, Primal is set to make questing sexy.

Those with a bloodlust for gothic adventure might want to sink their fangs into *Primal* (reviewed on page 66). Developed by SCEE's Studio Cambridge the game stars Jen, a spunky metal chick who gets sucked into a demon world named Oblivion where the balance between darkness and light has been disturbed, threatening chaos. Accompanied by a helpful gargoyle, Scree, Jen has to venture through the four varied realms of Oblivion, exploring, fighting and engaging in puzzle-filled missions. For the central combat element, you get a variety of mystical weapons, including laser whips(!) while a range of special moves add depth. Later in the game, it's also possible to unlock a bullet time effect, slowing down your enemies for easy carnage.

The visuals are the most striking aspect, with brooding landscapes, epic gothic architecture and detailed character design. Plentiful CGI sequences are also being included to move the plot along, and much work is going into giving each realm its own distinct look and indigenous population of pig-faced demons. We're especially like the underwater realm of Aquis where Jen grows gills and swims like a fish.

STOP PRESS
The latest release date for *Primal* is now the 7th of February.



GREAT APE Monkeys plus videogames equals pure fun. Developers take note!

APE ESCAPE 2 (SCEI/SCEE)

The original platformer/adventure was an unlikely smash hit on PSone, challenging you to capture evil time-travelling monkeys before they took over the world. The sequel is essentially more of the same, offering new locations, new enemies, loads of hidden extra prizes to find and a handsome arsenal of gadgets with which to ensnare the pesky primates. Amusingly, the main challenge is accompanied by three unlockable mini-games: Dance Monkey Dance, Monkey Climber and the cream of the crop, Monkey Football. Is Alan Partridge working at SCEI now then? It's aimed at kids, but, honestly, who can resist a monkey platformer?

THE SIMS (Maxis/EA)

It's sold millions of copies on the PC where the prospect of directing your own private Big Brother complete with arguments, showers and people weeing on the kitchen floor proved to much to resist. For the PS2 version, EA's originally open-plan soap opera sim is getting a makeover. The visuals and control system are being improved and you'll now have distinct goals to achieve. There's also a great Two-player mode where you compete to have the most popular Sim by getting promoted, moving out of home and losing that *Star Trek* wardrobe. The review code arrived as this issue went to print - review next issue!



DEVELOPER'S TOP FIVE

Arthur Parsons, Producer at Traveller's Tales, picks his insider highlights for 2003.

ENTER THE MATRIX

"Being a huge fan of *The Matrix* I can't wait to see what the Shiny guys do with the game. They have a terrific record so the potential is there!"

JAK AND DAXTER 2

"It'll be much better than *The Precursor Legacy* and will benefit from the code share that the developer Naughty Dog does with *Insomniac* [*Resident Evil 4* & *Clank*]."

APE ESCAPE 2

"*Ape Escape* was one of the best and most underrated PSone games. As such AE2 should be an incredible gameplay experience."

BALDUR'S GATE 2

"*Dark Alliance* is still one of my favourite PS2 titles. The follow up will be fantastic even if it's just more of the same. You can keep your tedious cut-scene games like *FFX*. This is a proper RPG."

SOUL CALIBUR 2

"*Soul Calibur* is still the definitive beat-'em-up so I'm eagerly awaiting the PS2 arrival of SC2. Stunning visuals combined with glorious beat-'em-up action!"

ALSO RELEASED

DEFENDER

(Midway)

JINX

(Hammerhead/SCEE)

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II

(Acclaim)

SILENT SCOPE 3

(KCE Tokyo/Konami)

SLY RACCOON

(Sucker Punch/SCEE)

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS

(LucasArts/Activision)

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI

(Genki/Ubi Soft)

TENNIS MASTER

SERIES 2003

(Microbots/Universal Interactive)

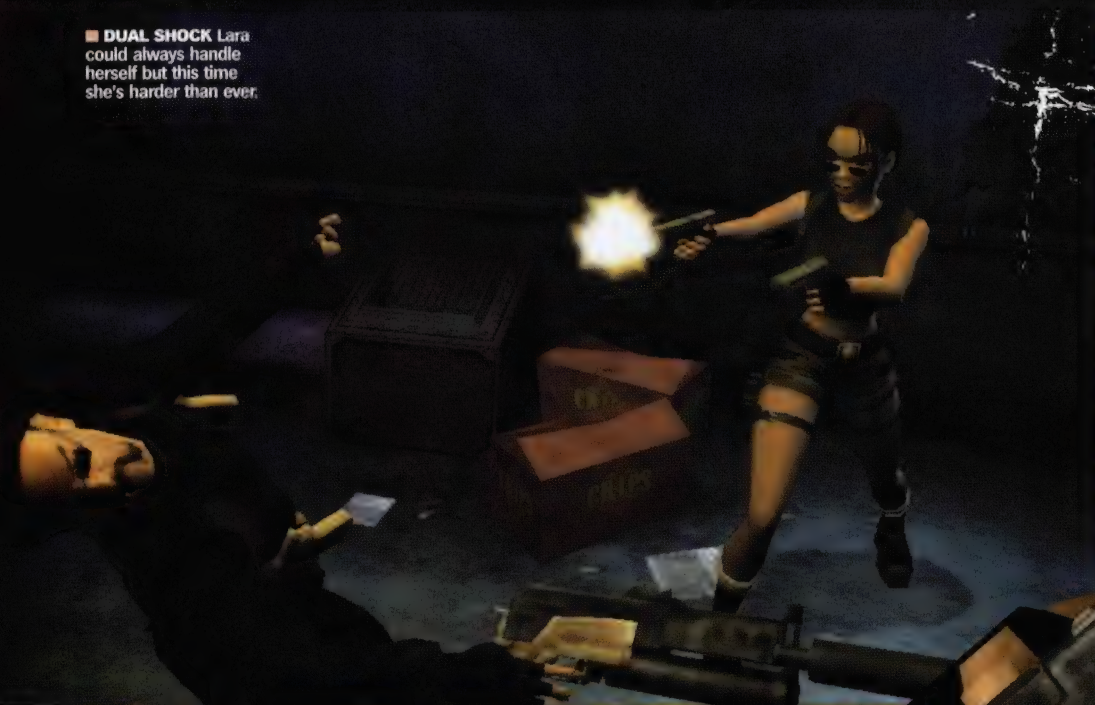
WILD ARMS 3

(Media Vision/Ubi Soft)





■ **DUAL SHOCK** Lara could always handle herself but this time she's harder than ever.



LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

(Core Design/Eidos)

It's been a long wait for Tomb Raider fans but Lara Croft is ready to reclaim the adventure crown on PS2. Can she still cut it? Oh yes, and how...

So she's back. After a series of PSone sequels, Lara Croft was locked up for a couple of years as Core Design went back to the archeological adventure blackboard and started again. The result is *Angel Of Darkness*, apparently the first of a four-part series.

Lara is in Paris investigating a series of medieval artworks, linked to a sinister Masonic sect and an evil alchemist. To complicate matters, she's been framed for the murder of Werner Von Croy – just one of a series of killings at the heart of the dark, grisly story. The most interesting new feature is Lara's evolving abilities: you can improve her jumping, upper body strength and mental dexterity by

exploring and solving puzzles. The control system has also been re-designed, and Lara is now constructed from an impressive 5,000 polygons. Although it seems that 4,320 of those are used on her big wobbly mams.

Core is promising a more mature adventure, with Lara placed in greater peril than ever before – even greater than when she was buried alive at the end of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*. The arcade adventure throne is there for the taking. Lara is probably already trying on crowns.

With her habit of being late, *OPS2* suspect Lara may not show up till March or so. Time will tell.



■ **REMEMBER ME?** Lara's back and she's hoping you like her new direction.



DVDS IN 2003

Four unmissable discs scheduled for next year.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

This is the second film in Peter Jackson's epic translation. Expect another two-tier release with the basic DVD coming out first and the lavish Special Edition following soon after.



HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

The bespectacled teen sorcerer returns, no doubt conjuring up plenty of special features to entice Potter-crazed fans.

UNFORGIVEN

Special edition of the excellent downbeat western with tenth anniversary documentaries plus cast and crew interviews.

GOODFELLAS

Martin Scorsese's gangster great will be re-released with all the extras it deserves after a lacklustre original.



MIC CONTROLLER
Now you can add vocals and rip samples from CDs. Choon!



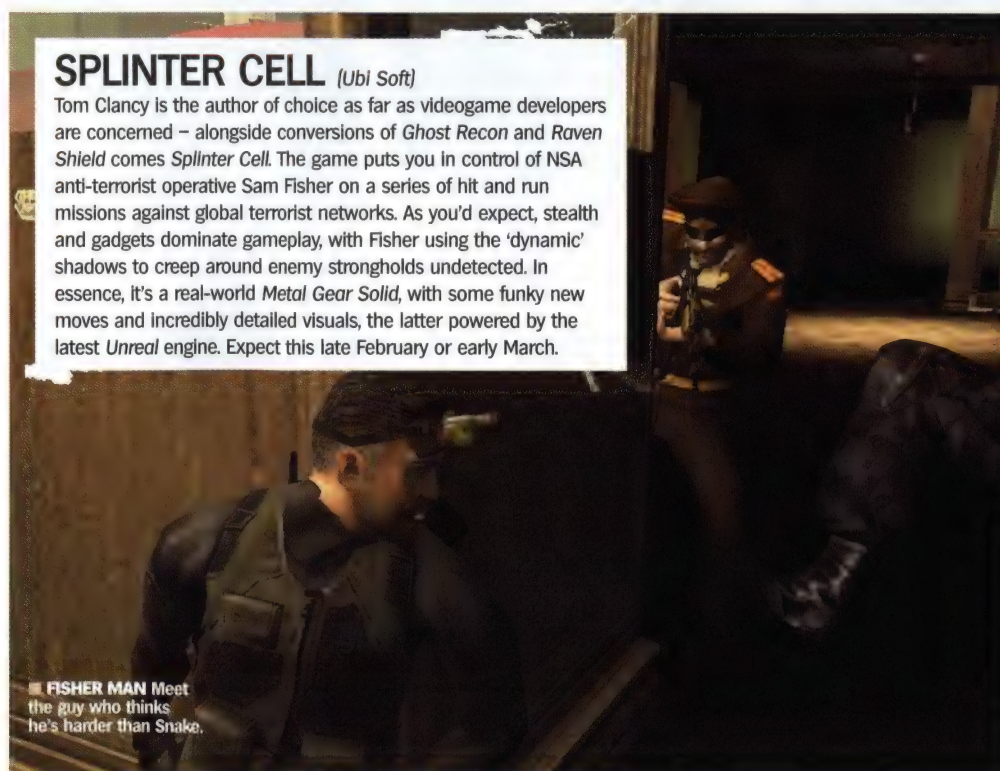
TAKE NOTE
Music 3's front end is less gimmicky and all the more stylish for it.

MUSIC 3 (Jester Interactive)

Jester Interactive's excellent music tool is back with a vengeance, having secured an endorsement deal with Perfecto records, allowing players to re-mix tracks like Paul Oakenfold's *Starry Eyed Surprise*. The new version of the award-winning series includes a mic feature so you can add vocals and a sampler, and grab chunks of your favourite CDs. And with 10,000 samples and 1,400 riffs included with the package, the sky's the limit. You'll also be able to DJ with your home-made tunes using a six turntable setup, and then mix your own visuals from a range of video sequences. It's the next logical step in creative entertainment. Fame, fortune and a conviction for illegal firearm possession are within everyone's reach.

SPLINTER CELL (Ubi Soft)

Tom Clancy is the author of choice as far as videogame developers are concerned – alongside conversions of *Ghost Recon* and *Raven Shield* comes *Splinter Cell*. The game puts you in control of NSA anti-terrorist operative Sam Fisher on a series of hit and run missions against global terrorist networks. As you'd expect, stealth and gadgets dominate gameplay, with Fisher using the 'dynamic' shadows to creep around enemy strongholds undetected. In essence, it's a real-world *Metal Gear Solid*, with some funky new moves and incredibly detailed visuals, the latter powered by the latest Unreal engine. Expect this late February or early March.



ALSO RELEASED

- ATV2: QUAD POWER RACING**
(Climax/Acclaim)
- BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA**
(Lost Toys/Infogrames)
- BEN HUR**
(Microdots/Universal Interactive)
- DAKAR 2**
(Acclaim)
- DARK ANGEL**
(Fox/Universal Interactive)
- DEF JAM VENDETTA**
(AKI/EA Sports BIG)
- GUILTY GEAR X 2**
(Sammy)
- THE MARK OF KRI**
(SCEA/SCEE)
- MIDNIGHT CLUB II**
(Angel Studios/Rockstar)
- MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE**
(Midway Chicago/Midway)
- WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEAT. SHAUN MURRAY**
(Shaba Design/Activision 02)
- SOS: THE FINAL ESCAPE**
(Irem/Agatec)
- SPACE CHANNEL 5 V.2**
(Sega United Game Artists/SCEE)
- WHIRL TOUR**
(Crave/Universal Interactive)
- WOLVERINE'S REVENGE**
(Genspool/Activision)





MARCH

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Massive games we know are coming... We just don't know when.

GRAN TURISMO 4

(Polyphony Digital/SCEE)
Earlier this year GT producer Kazunori Yamauchi revealed that Polyphony Digital was working on a fourth title in the series. The team is planning online components and a demo is expected to be shown at this year's E3.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

(Konami TYO/Konami)
The next Winning Eleven title (the Japanese name for the Pro Evo series) is out in Japan soon, which means we'll get our next fix of footy sim action by the end of the year.

WWE SMACKDOWN!

(Yuke's/THQ)
Another in the series of Yuke's' comprehensive wrestle-'em-ups will no doubt grapple us to the canvas before Christmas. We would like it to be called *SmackDown! Lick My Thong!*
BURNOUT 3
(Criterion/Acclaim)
The latest in Criterion's collection of arcade driving smash-'em-ups is touted for a 2003 release.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

(StormFront Studios/EA)
The film's already in the can, of course, so EA is certainly working on a videogame conversion of the final *Lord Of The Rings* segment.

ALSO RELEASED

CLUB FOOTBALL

(Codemasters)

DR MUTO

(Midway)

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW

(Kemco)

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

(LucasArts/Activision)

INDY RACING LEAGUE

(Brain In A Jar/Codemasters)

THE LOST

(Ubi Soft)

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

(Worthog/Universal Interactive)

MALICE

(Argonaut/Universal Interactive)

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

(Ubi Soft)

VEXX

(Acclaim Studios Austin/Acclaim)

WAR OF THE MONSTERS

(Incog Entertainment/SCEE)

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

(Capcom)

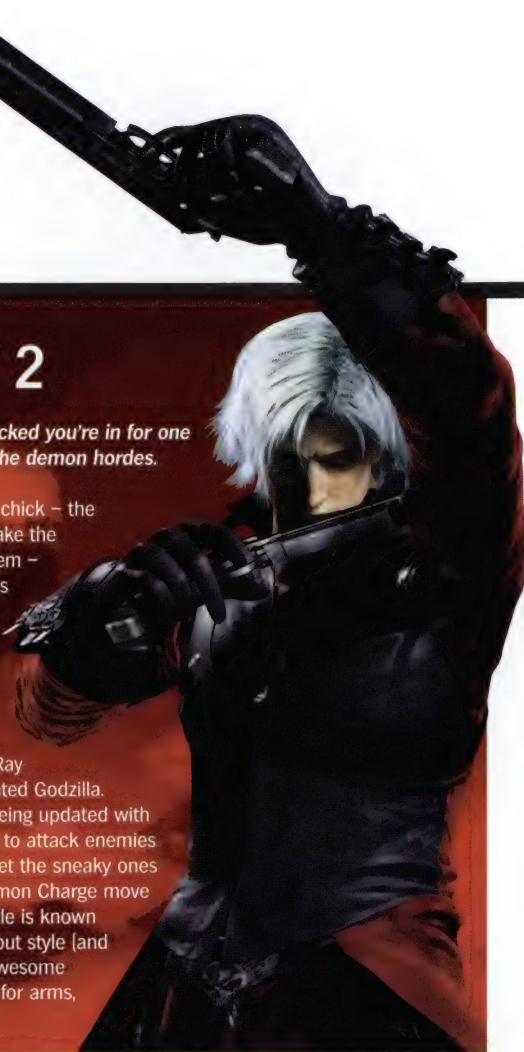
If you thought the original *Devil May Cry* rocked you're in for one hell of a treat as Dante returns to take on the demon hordes.



■ **DON'T CRY FOR ME** Dante's back and harder than ever. Then again, his enemies have learned some new tricks too...

Dante is back, and this time he's brought his chick – the leather-clad Lucia. You can choose to undertake the gothic action adventure with either one of them – each offers their own skills and differing paths through the mayhem. The demon-slaying action takes place in a architecturally varied city crawling with demon vultures, skeletal swordsmen and iron creatures with meat cleavers for hands. There are also enormous end-of-level baddies which seem to have crawled from the combined imaginations of Ray Harryhausen, Clive Barker and whoever invented Godzilla.

The already excellent combat system is being updated with new moves. Dante can now backflip off walls to attack enemies from above, and shoot over his shoulder to get the sneaky ones behind him. He also has access to a new Demon Charge move that turns him into a horned mega-beast. Little is known about the plot, but *DMC* has always been about style (and combat) over substance. Once you see the awesome monsters coming at you with swinging rocks for arms, the last thing on your mind will be narrative.



■ **GIVE HIM A BIG HAND** Medieval *Metal Gear* on PS2. Will it make a killing?

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

(K2/Activision)

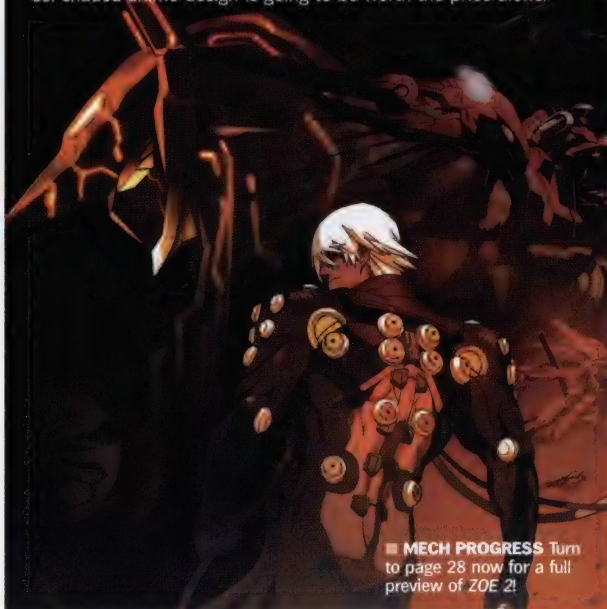
Activision is hailing the latest incarnation of the *Tenchu* series as, "The most realistic, stealth-based, ninja action/adventure game ever." Okay, it's not up against stiff competition, but the game does look impressive. Set a year after the events of the original *Tenchu*, *Wrath Of Heaven* provides a choice of three ninjas then puts you through 25 stealth missions involving theft, assassination and espionage.

Players get a range of new weapons and fighting moves and, of course, a variety of ways in which to inflict silent, sudden death on unwary guards. You'll also be able to unlock new killing methods. The developer is promising an open gameplay style with multiple ways of tackling each stage. Clever ninjas will be able to lure guards from their posts by throwing rice. Psychotic ninjas will probably just stab them in the face. Add to all this some stunningly evocative locations and realistic weather effects and you get the interactive James Clavell novel we've all dreamed of.

ZOE: THE 2ND RUNNER

(Konami JPN/Konami)

Hideo Kojima's 22nd Century mech battle game *Zone Of The Enders* pulled in a massive audience last year, although cynics pointed out that this may have had more to do with the MGS2 demo packaged with it. We'll find out how popular it is when Konami releases this visually stunning sequel, which takes the action out across the solar system, via space stations, battleships and the surface of Mars. You play a new pilot taking over the powerful mech machine *Jehuty* in battles against rebelling colonists. Tons of new weapons and fighting moves are promised, along with a much longer gameplay challenge. The super-cool cel-shaded anime design is going to be worth the price alone.



■ **MECH PROGRESS** Turn to page 28 now for a full preview of *ZOE 2*!

APRIL



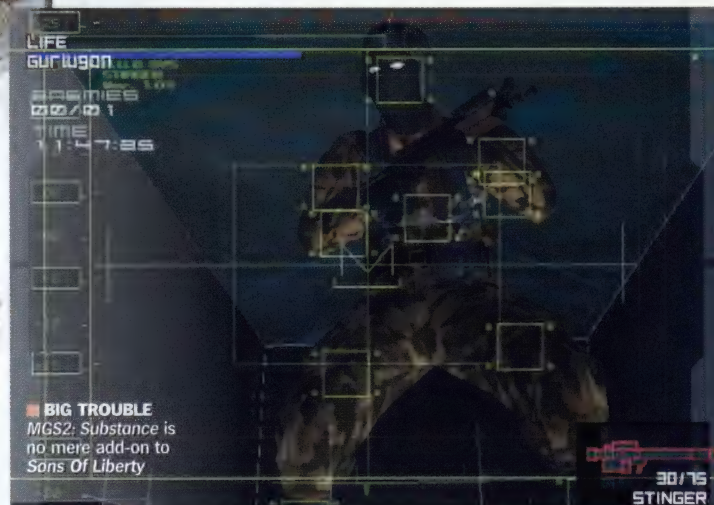
THAT'S BETTER With *Substance*, gamers will get more Snake, more action and less Raiden.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

(Konami JPN/Konami)

It's not a full sequel but it's bigger and more action-packed than most full games. It's MGS2: Substance – the Metal Gear all the fans wanted.

In lieu of *Metal Gear Solid 3*, which is probably around a decade away, Konami is seeking to keep stealth fiends happy with this feature-packed MGS2 spin-off. *Substance* contains over 200 VR missions – individual stealth and kill challenges based in virtual environments – and among these is a First-person mode. Then there are the Alternative missions: 100 short, sharp missions including bomb disposal, assassination and photography. Finally, Snake Tales is a range of five special missions starring the eponymous agent – among this lot is some bizarre stuff like a *Tony Hawk's*-style mission where Snake has to perform tricks on a skateboard. There are rumours about a range of extras, including faked outtakes like those shown at the end of *Toy Story*. The six million people who shelled out for MGS2 the first time might need a push, but the huge number of new challenges should persuade a good chunk to commit. It may get an early release, so keep an eye out!



COMING ATTRACTIONS (Continued)

STAR WARS GALAXIES

(LucasArts/SOE)

The massively multiplayer online *Star Wars* adventure is almost as hotly anticipated as *Episode III* the movie. We did say 'almost'.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 5

(Neversoft/Activision)

The Hawk himself may have hung up his pro wheels, but Neversoft is unlikely to follow anytime soon.

JAK AND DAXTER 2

(Naughty Dog/SCEE) After the critical and commercial success of the original, Naughty Dog is certainly lining up a sequel. Look out for info at this year's E3.

FIFA 2004

(EA Canada/EA Sports) Inevitable, of course. But will it include a Euro 2004 tournament option? Or will we later be purchasing FIFA 2004: Euro 2004?

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2003

(Evolution Studios/SCEE) All the new teams, drivers and cars and even more realistic environments.

DRIVER 3

(Reflections/Atari) The original chase game returns to challenge the GTA/Getaway hegemony.

ALSO RELEASED

BLOOD RAYNE

(Terminal Reality/Universal Interactive)

DARK CHRONICLE

(Level 5/SCEE)

DEAD TO RIGHTS

(Namco/SCEE)

ISS 3

(KCE Osaka/Konami)

MOTO GP 3

(Namco/SCEE)

RTX: RED ROCK

(LucasArts/Activision)

SHINOBI

(Sega/SCEE)

WWE CRUSH HOUR

(Pacific Coast Power and Light/THQ)



DIE HARD VENDETTA

(Bits Studios/Universal Interactive)

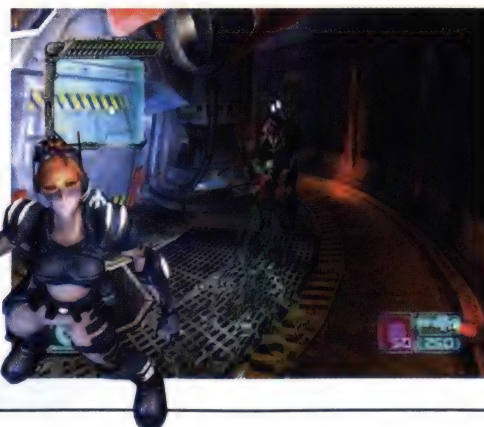
Set in and around a bustling Los Angeles, *Die Hard Vendetta* is an attempt to get as close to the atmosphere of the movies as possible. The action is hugely cinematic with slow-mo effects aplenty and the script, filled with wisecracks, has been put together with a screenwriter from Fox. You play John McClane on a quest to rescue his daughter from terrorists. Stealth is, once again, on the menu – although you get all the guns from the films, you can also use disguises and take terrorists hostage to get others to drop their weapons (making sure you grab the head guy, not some disposable lackey).

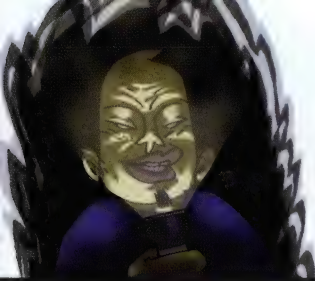
YIPPIE-KI-YAY! It's about time we had a hero with real character. Good to see you, John McClane.

STARCRAFT GHOST

(Blizzard/Universal Interactive)

StarCraft was a successful PC military strategy game in which the player controlled armies who fought rival races for the control of a far-off planet. *Ghost* takes the same setting, but puts you in control of a single soldier carrying out a range of stealth missions behind enemy lines. Your 'ghost' trooper, Nova, has the usual range of weapons, but can also call in air strikes and use psychic abilities. Could this be one of the surprise hits of the year?





MAY



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AOU EXPO 2003

21-22 February
Makuhari Messe Exhibition Centre, Tokyo
New coin-ops that will one day be converted to PS2.

E3

14-16 May
LA Convention Centre
The world's biggest videogame expo. Over 1,000 games to be announced.

ECTS

28-30 August
Earl's Court, London
Europe's videogame trade bash. PlayStation Experience will be open to the public.

STUFFLIVE 2003

25-28 September
Earl's Court, London
2002's gadget expo featured the Games Matrix game event. Hopefully, they'll bring it back again for 2003.

TOKYO GAME SHOW

September
Makuhari Messe Exhibition Centre, Tokyo
Japanese developers show their latest wares.

ALSO RELEASED

BLACK AND BRUISED

(Digital Fiction/Universal)

DESTRUCTION DERBY 4

(Studio Liverpool/SCEE)

FIRE WARRIOR

(Kuju/THQ)

FREESTYLE MX

(Midway)

GLADIUS

(LucasArts/Activision)

SPEED KINGS

(Acclaim)

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: RAVEN SHIELD

(Red Storm/Ubi Soft)

SILENT HILL 3

(Team Silent/Konami)

The only, truly terrifying PS2 survival horror franchise is back and grislier than ever.

A teenage girl passes out on the way to the shopping mall and, upon waking, discovers not an idyll of clothes shops and burger joints, but a nightmare of rotting monsters wandering bloodstained corridors. Yep, it's yet more psychological horror from Team Silent, this time apparently flitting between two worlds: the real world and a dark, hellish counterpoint. The lead character, Heather, can pick up several weapons through the game (including a neat sub-machine gun) and, as usual, must solve puzzles and battle hideous creatures in order to progress through the mystery. The constant darkness will be familiar to veterans of the series as will the surreal monster design. These freaks resemble things you might see in a Slipknot video. Or in a deranged drug-induced fever.

Little is known about the plot at the moment, but we've seen early previews of Heather wandering through an underground train station and encountering strange characters talking about being taken back to paradise. Looks like another generous slice of indecipherable mind sickness – although there are rumours that this one might actually make a bit of sense. We're not holding our breath, though.

■ **STUBBORN STAINS** Those blood stains look fresh. What is in those shadows?



■ **OLD GREY GRISTLE TEST** Heather steps in something icky in Silent Hill 3.

ENTER THE MATRIX

(Shiny Entertainment/Infogrames)

When Infogrames bought developer Shiny Entertainment in May, you knew the publisher had one thing on its mind: Shiny's ownership of the Matrix videogame licence. Now work is going ahead on Enter The Matrix developed in conjunction with the Matrix: Reloaded movie. It's not a conversion: like the latest Star Wars titles, it works alongside the films. You play as either Niobhe, the driver, or Ghost, the zen assassin, in a third-person action adventure featuring motion capture and voice acting from the cast, and a script by the Wachowski brothers. There are 20 guns, loads of cool slow-mo actions, driving sections and a hacking challenge allowing you to personalise the game. You will, without a shadow of a doubt, be taking the red pill.

■ **WALL POWER** Expect 'Bullet Time' shenanigans a-go-go when Enter The Matrix hits PS2.





RED DEAD REVOLVER

(Angel Studios/Capcom)

Ever fantasised about being in a Sergio Leone western, handing out gun justice to desperados then disappearing into the desert? Someone at Angel Studios obviously has. *Red Dead Revolver* follows hard-bitten gun fighter Red, who, raised by Indians when his family is butchered by bandits, promises to avenge their deaths – and gets the chance when the men responsible ride back into town.

It's a third-person action adventure with gun fights, fist fights and horseback fights taking in a range of wild west weapons (pistols, shotguns, banjos, etc). There are some cool touches like a first-person shooting cam that hovers over Red's shoulder and a penalty for shooting people in the back. Here's hoping for the obligatory whorehouse scene.



DEPUTY DEAD
The wild west (left) is about to get a whole lot 'wilder'.

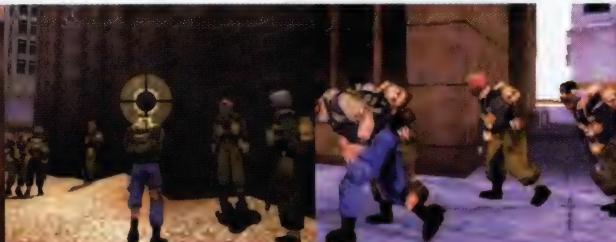


TOMMY KILL TRIGGER It's you vs the Nazis (right) in *Castle Wolfenstein*.

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

(Raster Productions/Activision)

Id's PC classic *Wolfenstein* was really the start of the FPS genre. It premiered the classic first-person 'gun at bottom of screen' view, the variety of weapons and the constant bloodshed. This update, released on PC last year, is a return to that gothic Nazi castle setting, pitting you against a weird bunch of demonic, genetically modified storm troopers. Raster promises a state-of-the-art visual banquet, with the *Quake III Arena* engine handling movement, and photo-realistic character and environment textures making for eye-popping baddies and locations. We're also expecting the control system and gameplay structure to be overhauled for PS2. Four-player deathmatch action is inevitable, and multiplayer online support a distinct possibility.



FREEDOM: THE BATTLE FOR LIBERTY ISLAND

(IO Interactive/EA)

Have you got what it takes to liberate the Big Apple from an invading force, street by street? Time to find out.

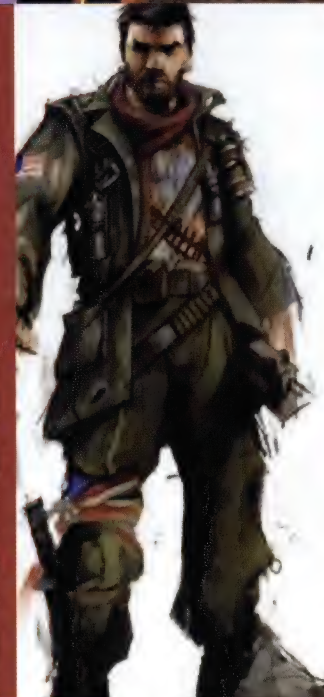
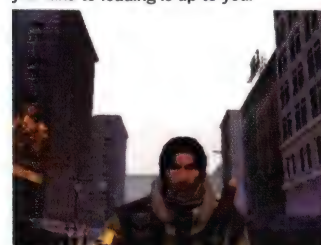
Imagine that Russia won the cold war then celebrated its victory by invading New York. That's the premise behind IO Interactive's squad-based third-person action title, with you playing a downtrodden everyman joining the Big Apple resistance on an eight-chapter fight back. Controlling other soldiers is achieved with a series of commands, but they won't listen until you have enough charisma points – gained by carrying out certain daring missions.

Progress is marked by taking back key assets from the Russians. These could be post offices or police stations, and they'll usually be protected by military emplacements. You get a choice of seven weapons, including Magnum, rocket launcher and shotgun, each with a zoom function. It's played out in an accurate depiction of New York, which gets more and more knackered as the game goes on. *Freedom* also comes with two Multiplayer modes: a standard capture the flag option and a sort of siege affair with one team defending their base against the other two players. It's possibly one of the most coherent and interesting plots to come out of the development mire for quite a while. Let's hope the game delivers.



BIG APPLE PUREE The game is set in NYC, but with the Soviets in control this is a lawless and violent place.

RELUCTANT HERO In *Freedom* you start off as a regular guy. How well you take to leading is up to you.



RUMOURS

Enticing whispers about the games yet to be confirmed for 2003.

FINAL FANTASY XI

Square is still deciding whether or not to release FFXI in Europe. The problem is in translating this huge game into all the different European languages. We remain optimistic.

MEDAL OF HONOR

EA is said to be working on another MOH first-person shooter, this time set in WWII's Pacific Front and beginning with events at Pearl Harbor.

HALO, HALO

A FPS is being developed by Lost Boys, and those in the know are already labelling it a 'Halo beater'. SCEE has snapped up the rights.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

Apparently, this is going to have loads of management features! Could it be true?

ONLINE ECSTASY

The next wave of EA Sports titles – plus *SmackDown! 5*, *Destruction Derby 4*, *Marvel Superheroes* and *Lord Of The Rings* – are all rumoured to include online play.

ALSO RELEASED

CHARLIE'S ANGELS
(Ubisoft)

EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK
(NIS/THQ)

FREQUENCY 2
(Harmonix/SCEE)

FUTURAMA
(UDS/SCI)

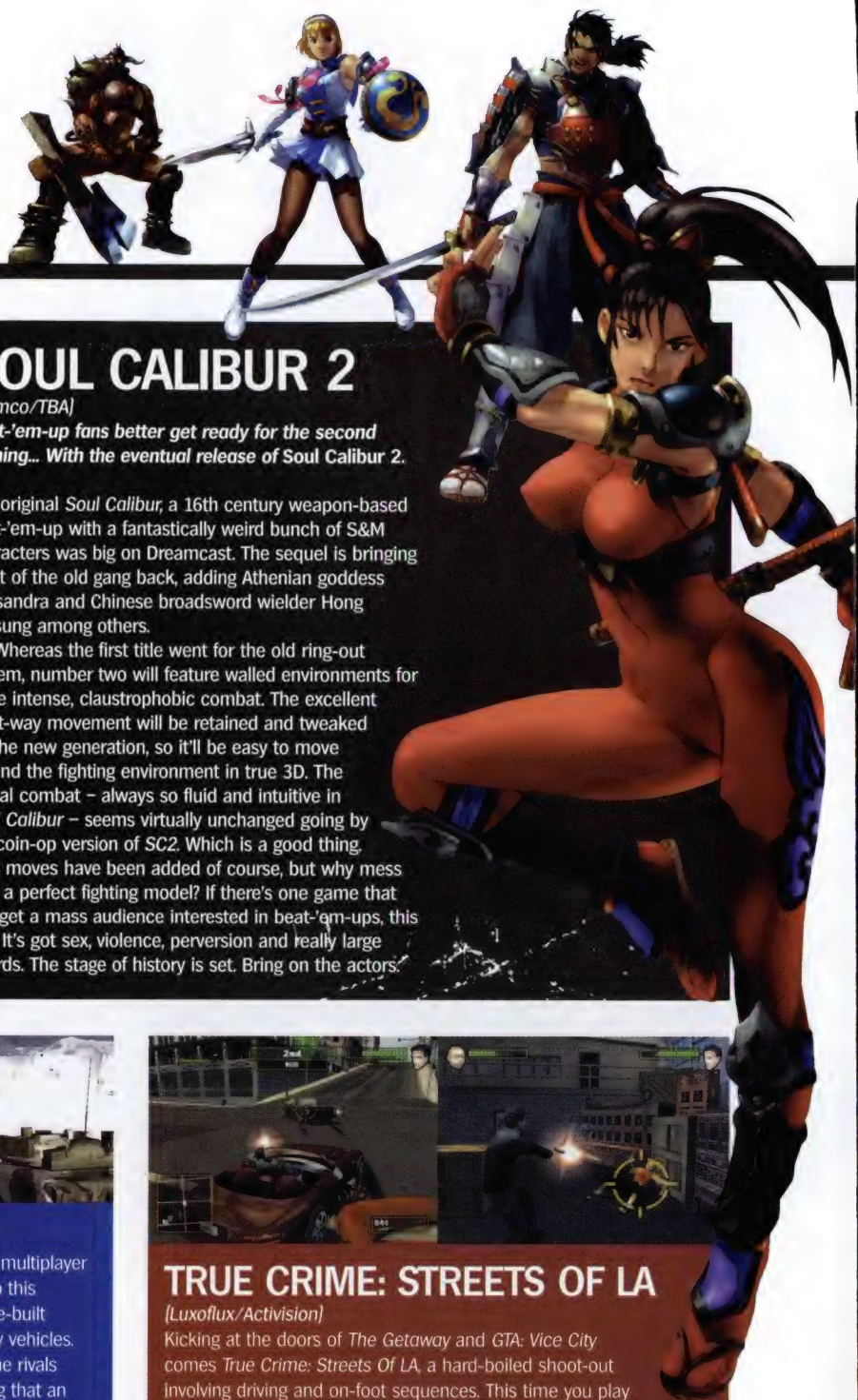
THE GREAT ESCAPE
(SCI)

HULK
(Universal Interactive)

RISE TO HONOR
(SCEA/SCEE)



JULY



SOUL CALIBUR 2

(Namco/TBA)

Beat-'em-up fans better get ready for the second coming... With the eventual release of Soul Calibur 2.

The original *Soul Calibur*, a 16th century weapon-based beat-'em-up with a fantastically weird bunch of S&M characters was big on Dreamcast. The sequel is bringing most of the old gang back, adding Athenian goddess Cassandra and Chinese broadsword wielder Hong Yunsung among others.

Whereas the first title went for the old ring-out system, number two will feature walled environments for more intense, claustrophobic combat. The excellent eight-way movement will be retained and tweaked for the new generation, so it'll be easy to move around the fighting environment in true 3D. The actual combat – always so fluid and intuitive in *Soul Calibur* – seems virtually unchanged going by the coin-op version of SC2. Which is a good thing. New moves have been added of course, but why mess with a perfect fighting model? If there's one game that can get a mass audience interested in beat-'em-ups, this is it. It's got sex, violence, perversion and really large swords. The stage of history is set. Bring on the actors.



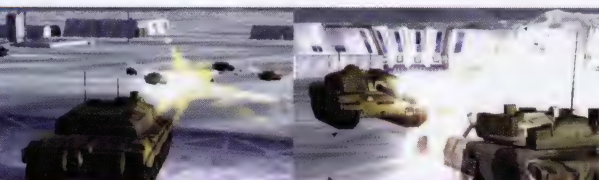
■ **BLADE TOO** Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously hasn't seen *Soul Calibur 2*.



ONLINE AT LAST

Take on the world from your own living room.

Later this year (which *OPS2* guess to be sometime between July and September), Aussie PS2 owners will have the chance to get in on the action. SCE will be releasing a Broadband Gaming Pack for around the price of a standard game, which you plug into your machine, then into your phone socket or cable set-top box. You'll need to subscribe with a Broadband provider like Bigpond or Optus. Once online, you'll get to play titles like *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs* and *Hardware: Online Arena*, and possibly even *This Is Football 2003* and *WRC Online*.



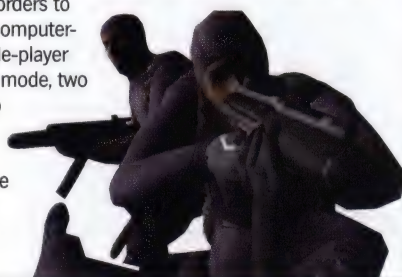
HARDWARE (Studio London/SCEE)

To get PS2 owners online, Sony needs plenty of addictive multiplayer blast-'em-ups – *Hardware* rolls up and shoots its way into this category. The game gives players access to huge purpose-built battle arenas and an assortment of heavily armed military vehicles. From here, it's all out war, as groups of trigger-happy online rivals riddle each other with bullets and missiles. Sony is hoping that an online community forms around the game and wants to encourage players to get into clans and compete in various competitions set up by the publisher. There are also plans for downloadable extras such as new environments. Sounds like great fun.

SOCOM: US NAVY SEALs

(Zipper Interactive/SCEE)

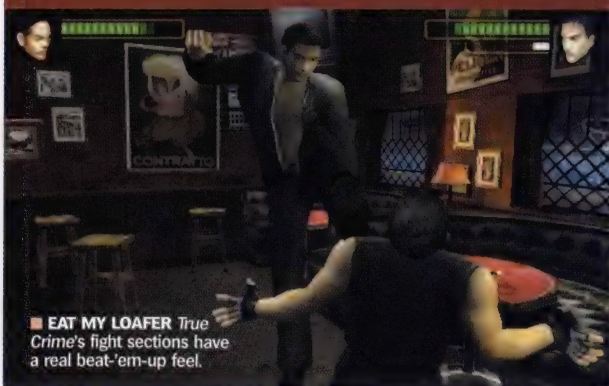
It's gone down a storm in the states, now it's marching over here. Zipper's *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs* is a strategic shooter pitching your squad of SEALs against a swarm of intelligent enemies in 12 fraught missions. Gameplay combines stealth, sniping and physical combat, with the help of 60 realistic weapons and gadgets. The game comes with a headset so you can shout orders to other online players or to computer-controlled allies in the single-player game. With the Multiplayer mode, two groups of eight users go up against each other in tactical SEALs-versus-terrorist face-offs. This is the one it'll be worth buying a Broadband Adaptor for.



TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

(Luxoflux/Activision)

Kicking at the doors of *The Getaway* and *GTA: Vice City* comes *True Crime: Streets Of LA*, a hard-boiled shoot-out involving driving and on-foot sequences. This time you play cop-on-the-edge Nick Kang who, like every fictional cop since Martin Riggs in *Lethal Weapon*, has a history of ultraviolence. Kicked off the force he joins an elite unit determined to take down Russian, Chinese and hometown crime syndicates. There are 20 missions and 100 sub-missions and the game employs a branching system – so your performance in one mission dictates what you have to do in the next. Look forward to gun battles, kung fu and car chases through 400 square miles of accurately modelled Southern California.



■ **EAT MY LOAFER** *True Crime's* fight sections have a real beat-'em-up feel.

ALSO RELEASED

BREATH OF FIRE V
(Capcom)

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
(Ubi Soft)



CHAOS LEGION [Capcom]

After *Devil May Cry* and *Onimusha* comes yet another big new Capcom franchise. *Chaos Legion* is an action RPG based on the popular series from Japan's *Dragon* comic book. You play knight-on-the-edge Sieg Wahrheit who must track down bad seed former ally Victor Delacroix, possibly in a fight over who has the silliest name. Combat is real-time and, armed with a big sword, you get to fight with the help of ghost knights who can be summoned by hitting the **X** button. The visuals are splendid, featuring all the gothic grandeur we've come to know and love from *Devil May Cry*. If you like your RPGs with less talk and more large-scale fantasy rioting keep your eye on this.



CONFLICT: DESERT SABRE

[Pivotal/SCI]

Looks like the American army won't be the only ones going back to the Gulf this year. Pivotal is currently working on *Conflict: Desert Sabre*, a sequel to this year's well-received *Desert Storm* strategic shooter. If anything, this one's going to be more of the strategic and less of the shooter – you're joining SAS forces sent into Iraq during the 1991 war, so this time there'll be more sneaking about. Plus, with a nod to Andy McNab's blockbusting book *Bravo Two Zero*, there will be an emphasis on survival and escape. Hopefully we'll all be able to write top-selling books about our experiences.



EYETOY

Get in the game, for real with EyeToy. Sony's groovy camera and motion detector toy is due out here in June, bringing with it some totally new forms of gameplay. Just plug the Webcam device into your PS2 and it can trace your movements, using them to control the on-screen action. EyeToy can even show you on screen as a part of the game. SCE is bundling a disc featuring around 20 mini-games with the hardware – the contents are unconfirmed but boxing, plate-spinning and face slapping[?] Ideas are being explored. The Webcam is also expected to be used in conjunction with forthcoming online multiplayer games, so you'll be able to see a photo of your *Quake* opponents in the corner of the screen as you blast them. Scary.



ALSO RELEASED

GHOST HUNTER
[Studio Cambridge/SCEE]

FINDING NEMO
[Travellers Tales/THQ]

TERMINATOR 3
[Paradigm Entertainment/Infogrames]



CLOCK TOWER 3

[Capcom]

Survival horror comes to London town in the latest gory offering from the genre daddy, Capcom.

The *Clock Tower* series began as a horrifically gory 'point and click' adventure in 1997, featuring the kind of surreal monsters and disturbing plot twists we've come to associate with Konami's *Silent Hill* games. The third title is going for a third-person action adventure approach, but the horror quota is set to remain just as high.

You play young girl Alyssa who, on visiting London for her birthday, is suddenly warped into a weird dimension of ghosts and ancestral terror. No, it makes no sense, but that's the point. Gameplay is based more on exploration and shocks than combat, while the CGI scenes are directed by Kinji Fukasaku, of *Battle Royale* fame. Worth it for that alone.

■ **REGULAR EXORCISE**
Capcom's latest survival horror franchise makes a visual nod to *The Exorcist*.



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER



LICENCE FRENZY

Big screen and goggle box tie-ins ahoy!

Yep, 2003 is a veritable licence mine with TV and film tie-ins glittering in the game release cavern. Look out for *Dark Angel*, *Terminator 3*, *Backyard Wrestling*, *Hulk*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick*, *Futurama*, *The Great Escape* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Personally, we'd like to see a translation of the forthcoming *Daredevil* film and a horrific third-person adventure based on cult TV prison shocker *Oz* by the GTA team.



ALSO RELEASED

CY GIRLS
(Konami JPN/Konami)

F1 2003
(EA/EA)

LAMBORGHINI
(Rage)

TAK AND THE POWER OF THE JUJU
(Avaniche/THQ)

FREAKY FLYERS
(Midway)

JUDGE DREDD VS JUDGE DEATH

(Rebellion/Universal Interactive)

Oxford-based developer Rebellion has been busy since acquiring the 2000AD comic last year. The company has announced the release of two Judge Dredd films, and is now revealing details of its *Dredd Vs Death* FPS videogame. Set, of course, in the sprawling urban nightmare of Mega City One, you take control of the sci-fi Dirty Harry as he dispenses justice to various street perps, while looking out for Death and his apocalyptic cohorts. Rebellion is promising a living environment teeming with people, traffic and crime. The team is going for a sharp gritty look, forget the hideous camp of Danny Cannon's 1995 movie and think classic Dredd artists like Mike McMahon and Ron Smith. All very exciting, but when's Halo Jones coming to PS2?



BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

(Revolution Studios/TBC)

The *Broken Sword* series began on the PC in 1996 as a gorgeous 'point and click' adventure, following American student George Stobart as he investigated a conspiracy involving the legendary Knights Templar. This second sequel retains both the hero and the refined European comic book look of the others, but updates to full 3D and gives players direct control over George, who's again accompanied by luscious euro totty Nico Collard. Revolution is promising an innovative hybrid of deep puzzle solving and action gameplay, with George running, jumping and climbing around Europe again on an ancient conspiracy mission. The first two titles were classics – hopefully the switch to 3D won't sully the recipe.

SUMMON THIS! FFX's Yuna the summoner has gone all Lara in FFX-2.



FINAL FANTASY X-2

(Square/SCEE)

It's the continuing adventures of Yuna as Square injects the world of Final Fantasy X with a dose of attitude.

For the first time Square is reviving the story and characters from one of its *Final Fantasy* titles, rather than ditching everything and starting from scratch. Set two years after *FFX*, *Final Fantasy X-2* follows the continuing adventures of Yuna the summoner. The cheeky minx has now developed a bit of Lara Croft attitude sporting hotpants and a pair of pistols: she even has a few action scenes, leaping across chasms and climbing rockfaces, usually *Final Fantasy* titles merely require characters to wander from one place to another. Exciting stuff for lovers of RPGs, not to mention lovers of girls in hotpants.

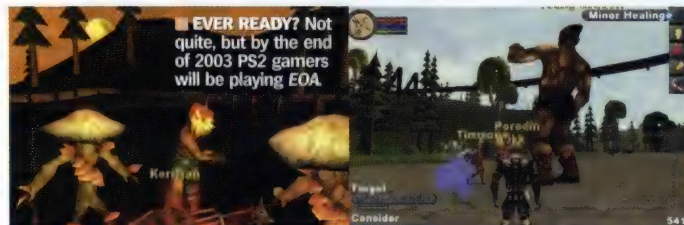


FEAR EFFECT: INFERNO

(Kronos Digital Entertainment/Eidos)
Mixing stylised anime visuals with plentiful CGI sequences, great characters, religious symbolism, *Blade Runner* environments and gallons of adult content (think blood, swearing and lipstick lesbianism) the *Fear Effect* series of third-person action adventures has earned itself a sizeable audience of game perverts. *Inferno* stars the sexy assassins from *Fear Effect 2* – Hana and Rain – in a new story. Will they be indulging in brief and mildly suggestive Sapphic cut-scenes? That was a rhetorical question, of course.



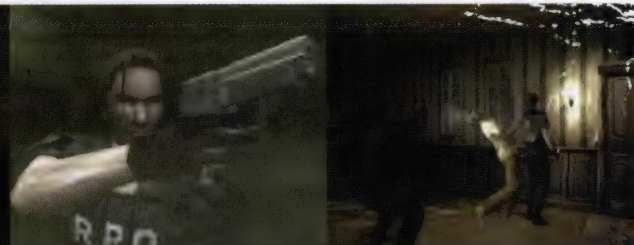
LOOKS LIKE RAIN
Assassins Rain and Hana are back in a new adventure.



EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

(Sony Online Entertainment/TBC)

Since launching in 1999, the PC multiplayer online adventure *Everquest* has lured thousands of subscribers with its gigantic landscapes filled with monsters, quests and adventurers. The PS2 version is being tweaked to put the emphasis on action rather than chat, but as in a traditional RPG you need to pick a character to develop by winning fights and learning skills. Except here you meet up with other players, form guilds and take on missions together. The game contains thousands of quests and unique character abilities, and is designed to support everything from quick 20-minute bursts to 11-hour sessions. Life won't be the same again.



RESIDENT EVIL NETWORK

(Capcom)

Who can you trust? *Resi Evil's* going online and mixing things up with untrustworthy, fake companions amongst the players.

If *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs* doesn't get you rushing out for a Network Adaptor, this baby will. Set in and around Raccoon City at the time of the first two games, *Resi Network*, gives you a choice of eight inhabitants of the zombie plagued town all desperate to escape. Although you begin the game alone, you'll team up with three other players to succeed in your evacuation. Whichever of the eight characters aren't chosen by you and your online cohorts are controlled by the computer. Will these be trustworthy, or will they all go a bit 'Ash from *Alien*? Capcom isn't saying much, but it's no doubt vital that you as players make sure you pick a varied bunch – choosing the four hardest characters, might leave you short in the computer hacking and lock-picking departments.

Like any good horror movie, the game features periods when you all work together, and periods when you go it alone. There's no word yet on any boss monsters or cameo roles for *Resi* luminaries Claire Redfield, Jill Valentine or Albert Wesker. And as chat is probably controlled by the players themselves (via keyboard or joystick) we'll only have ourselves to blame for B-movie dialogue.

STIFF COMPETITION At last, with *Resident Evil Network* you don't have to face the horror alone.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2004

We know how you like to plan ahead. Here's what the year after next has in store...

Think 2003 is already old news? There are a host of appetising titles queuing up on the very distant horizon. *Ion Storm* is set to release its *Deus Ex* sequel featuring new lead characters and an even darker plot. Oh and in a similar vein, *Metal Gear Solid 3* is a distinct possibility. Several long-running series have new editions lined up, including *Tekken 5*, *Dragon Quest VIII* and the much rumoured *Final Fantasy XII*. We can also look forward to a game version of Tarantino's latest *Kill Bill* as well as, gulp, originals like an HP Lovecraft-inspired survival horror called *Call Of Cthulhu* and Revolution's as-yet-unsigned *Good Cop, Bad Cop*.

ALSO RELEASED

- AREA 51**
(Midway)
- ALTER ECHO**
(Outrage/THQ)
- BATMAN 2**
(Ubi Soft)
- FAR CRY**
(Crytek Studios/Ubi Soft)
- PROJECT BG&E**
(Ubi Soft)
- SUIKODEN III**
(Konami TLO/Konami)
- CRANK THE WEASEL**
(Midway)
- XIII**
(Ubi Soft)

Vice City Slickers



OPS2 has taken up residence in Rockstar's awesome new crime capital to bring you 25 defining moments from the best game of the year.



A few issues ago we brought you a world exclusive review of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. But there was no way in hell we were going to leave the best game of 2002 there. While other mags were still waiting for a first look at *Vice City*, we burned the midnight oil (and a lot of cars), went deep and played hard, fuelled by Pina Colodas and a single desire to bring you 25 incredible moments that define this neon drenched experience in all its glory. Some you'll recognise with a guilty grin. Some will point you in new directions. So whether you're a resident, or planning your first trip to Vice City, roll up your jacket sleeves, slip on those espadrilles and boogie!

1

THE FULL SPECTRUM

A brief nostalgic wallow in the days of cassette loading and rubber keyboards.

It's impossible to fault *Vice City's* eighties credentials. No sooner have you popped the disc in a PS2 than you're treated to a double whammy of retro references. The first, a pixelated, 8-bit loading sequence complete with tinny, beeping soundtrack is a kick in the linen pants for anyone who remembers Commodore 64

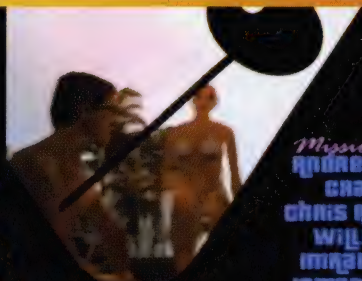
gaming (and load times). The second shows just how far gaming has come, as a Jan Hammer-esque synth line kicks the game off proper, introducing a credits sequence worthy of a classic Michael Mann movie. And when the music finally fades, whose voice do you hear? Tom Sizemore's! How freakin' cool is that?

Too Cool!

■ **HAMMER TIME** Jan Hammer, that is. Rockstar gets those *Miami Vice* references in early.

Map Designers
 adam cochrane
 nik baylon
 gary mcnam
 kristian baillie
 krisdian wood
 andrew sweeney
 steven mulholland
 wayland standing
 campbell j. ock

Graphic Design
 sudang petri



Mission Design
 andrew dunn
 chris fytche
 chris hutchwell
 william mullis
 mark sanyal
 james wong
 john haine

Did you know? A rocket launcher armed with four rockets is located in the Hooker Inn on the road to the airport.

2

TINY CHOPPER, BIG BANG

Radio-controlled 'copter chaos ensues in Demolition Man.

So you've met Avery, the crooked Texan real estate mogul and you've won his trust. Then he hits you with the big one. There's a building development that he wants destroyed, and he's got a peach of way for you to do it. Piloting a radio-controlled helicopter you've got to fly it around the concrete shell and deposit bombs on

each floor within a tight time limit. Oh, and did we mention the armed security guards? This mission is no breeze, but set the bombs in time and the pay-off brings the house down. Literally. Even better, this is great practice for flying the real helicopter later in the game...

Once you pick up a bomb the radar will show you the position of the target relative to the RC helicopter.

■ **DROP THE BOMB**
Using a toy helicopter to plant the dynamite is a genius idea.

05:21
\$00002013
♥ 094
★★★★★
time: 05:57
targets left: 4

Mission Impeccable!

3

Discovered



MESSIN' ABOUT IN BOATS

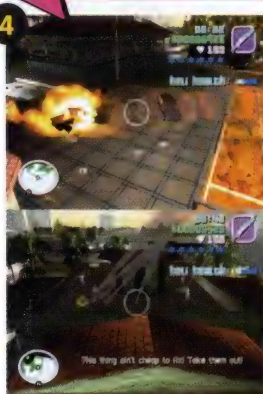
It's not just about stealing autos.

It's the middle of the night and as Tommy Vercetti you're enjoying a lull between jobs just cruising the streets, keeping your eyes open for any action. Nothing's doing on Vice Point so you make for the bridge over into Little Havana when you spot a set of steps by the water. You stop, and head down. There, moored right in front of you is a Police Launch. You hop on board and press (A). Sure enough, you're at the controls of your first sea-worthy GTA vehicle! Bombing across the moonlit bay, slicing waves of water into the air, you get to thinking: life doesn't get much better than this.

If you're a fan of military hardware a Patriot is available from Phil Cassidy's place at any time. There's also an armed chopper later in the game.

Mission Impeccable!

4



RIDING SHOTGUN

Take to the skies in the phenomenal Phnom Penh '86.

Once you've won the trust of Cuban crimelord Diaz you get this ass-kicking mission. With Lance Vance at the controls of Diaz's chopper the two of you fly over to Prawn Island to 'collect' some money. By collect, we mean hang out of the window with a rifle clearing an estate of gun-toting goons before they shoot you out of the sky. And just supposing you clean up the area without haemorrhaging kerosene and corpuscule ketchup, Lance then drops you off to shoot your way through the house past a gang of henchmen to the roof where the money's stashed. This is Vice City at its brutal, headlong best.

5

FOUR WHEELS GOOD, TWO WHEELS BETTER

The beauty of bikes.

Nothing can beat the first time you deck your first biker or posing preppy and steal a ride. Whether you're perched on a wasp-engined scooter or astride a throbbing hog, taking in the sights as you weave in and out of the traffic on two wheels is a fantastic experience. And then you discover you can show off with controlled endos and wheelies. Look out for the PCJ 600 perched on a grass verge near the Malibu Club – a cool stunt race mission awaits.

■ **BIKER GROOVE**
Feel the engine pulsing between your legs. Mmmmm.



Too Cool!

Mission Impeccable!

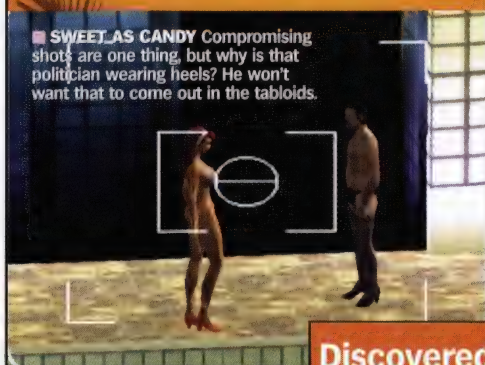
6

CANDIED CAMERA

Porn, politics and blackmail in Martha's Mug Shot.

There's no finer example of VC's ability to combine several different styles of play in one comic mission than Martha's Mug Shot. Congressman Shrub has been opposing the release of your porno flick starring the insatiable Candy Suxxx. Your mission is to take the Sparrow helicopter and tall Candy as she makes her liaison with the politician. As if that wasn't fun enough, you then have to position yourself across the street and get some 'compromising' shots. Have the chopper standing by as you'll need to hightail it back to the studio.

SWEET AS CANDY Compromising shots are one thing, but why is that politician wearing heels? He won't want that to come out in the tabloids.



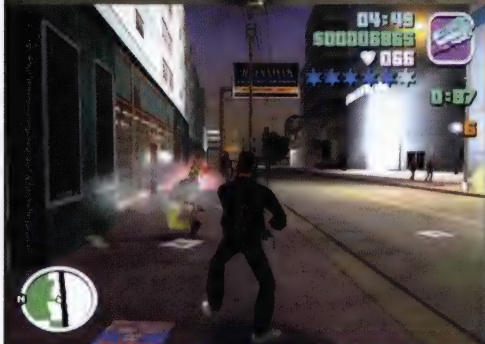
Discovered

7

MINIGUN MANIA

Guns don't kill people. We kill people.

Vice City has some real gems lying in wait for you explorative types. Have a nose around the Downtown area and you may well stumble into this frenzied 'Rampage'. You'll have to mow down a load of gang members with this military-grade minigun in the time limit. That's no problem as this beauty will take out a city bus in under a second. Cops aren't a worry, the only problem is that you don't get to keep the damn thing once you're finished.



8

Too Cool!



TIME TO GET TANKED UP

Rule the roost from the armoured safety of a Rhino.

You'll be able to drive the tank as part of a mission, but if you don't park it up before the time limit expires it'll explode. However, one way to guarantee another ride in an armoured truck is to head to the Mall. Here, stock up on armour and fancy weaponry, then stand outside and kill anything that moves. Keep your armour topped up and aim for the maximum Wanted level. Soon a whole army regiment will be on your ass. If you're quick and can get to a tank before being wasted, you'll have no shortage of police targets to fire at. Happy tanking.

9

Discovered



I AM THE LAW
Meet the most corrupt officer in the VCPD - you!

COPPER CHOPPER

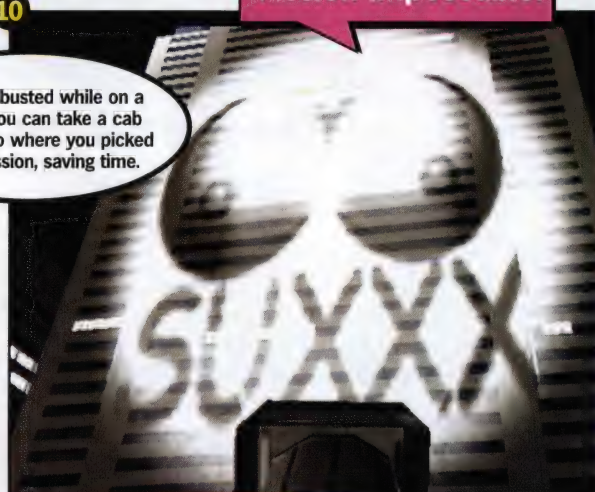
Cause havoc when you hi-jack the police 'copter.

There are several helicopters for the curious to find. The key is to search every stairwell in the city for roof access. Our goal has always been to nab the VCPD's Maverick for ourselves. Depending on the time of day it's actually a snap once you've explored Downtown. Alternatively grab a different type of air transport and search the rooftops from the sky. For added realism, why not dress up in the police uniform that you acquire from the Cop Land mission and live the dream. Impersonating an officer of the law while soaring in the azure skies above Vice City - magic!

Mission Impeccable!

10

Wasted or busted while on a mission? You can take a cab right back to where you picked up the mission, saving time.



PORNUCOPIA

Turning naughty vids into greenbacks in G-Spotlight.

The film studio missions are some of the most entertaining in Vice City. Its finale (and the key to making money out of the property) is to advertise your skin-flick by producing a tasteful bit of spotlight advertising. The most logical way to get there is via a madcap roof jumping course across the city. The mission features some of the most insane stunts out there - jumping between two skyscrapers anyone? It also requires a fair bit of concentration, but if your PCJ 600 skills aren't up to scratch by the end of the mission, nothing can help you.



Did you know? There are loads of swimming pools in VC, one is in the shape of the Rockstar logo. In it you'll find a free flamethrower. Nice!

Location, location,

Pinpoint the exact whereabouts of our defining moments on the Vice City map.

12

Discovered

ROOFTOP SNIPER

Use the vantage to your advantage.

Climb on to one of Little Havana's rooftops and not only will you see that there are plenty of ramps for insane stunt bonus opportunities, but if you ascend the steps in the yard behind the Kaufman Cabs billboard, you can find a free PSG1 laser scope rifle. Jump onto the rail in front of the billboard and as well as a hidden package stashed there, you'll discover it's an ideal vantage point to pick off unsuspecting passers-by with your new toy. Deeply questionable behaviour in the light of recent events, but hey, we didn't make the game.

13

Mission Impeccable!

Love Fist ruined my life!

TRANNY BASHER

Deal with a stalking queen in Psycho Killer.

Some of the best sub-missions in the game are to be found by hanging around with lairy, drug-addled Scottish rock combo Love Fist. Psycho Killer is a relatively easy mission, but where else would you get to chase after a beefy male stalker in women's clothes and roughly-applied lippy?

Too Cool!

11



WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM

D'ya want a flake in that?

One of the more strange purchases on the property lists is the Ice Cream firm. Although only a front for selling off more dodgy 'candy', it's still important to keep the real business end up, so your first mission is to get in the van and sell ice creams. Pretty boring, you might think, but once the infectious ice cream van music gets into your soul the money will come flowing in faster than you can say 'strawberry split'. Keep an eye out for sweet-toothed gang bangers though, they'll drag you onto the street given half the chance. Nice cones.



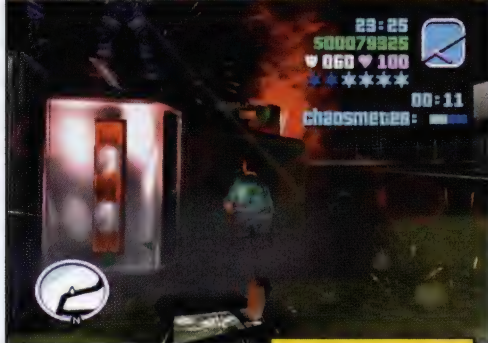
Mission Impeccable!

14

CHAOS THEORY

Anarchy may be your stock in trade, but Messing with the Man really tests your rabble-rousing skills.

The biker gang are almost as psychotic as you. In this mission, they want you to cause as much chaos as possible in two minutes. It's tougher than you think – shooting a few cops won't cut it. You must plan your chaos. Start by parking a few stolen cars and a skillfully thrown grenade will then set off an impressive chain reaction. If you've already got yourself a wanted level before you begin the mission, then the serious troops will soon arrive when you start shooting everything in sight. Fire rockets at the helicopter and tank and those sullen Hell's Angels will eventually be impressed.



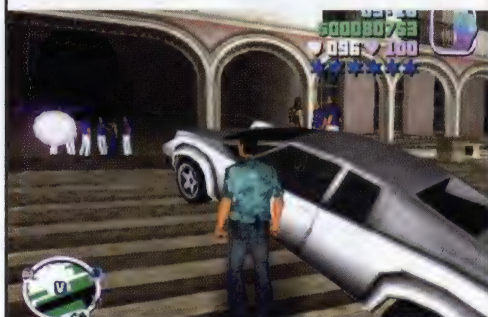
Too Cool!

15

DECADENT DECADE

Act like a petulant rock star in your own mansion.

Following the eighties theme to the max, Vice City is all about decadence. And what could be more decadent than owning your own mansion (renamed the Vercetti Estate, after you've assassinated the previous resident)? It comes complete with your own Maverick helicopter and weapon stash, but nothing makes you feel more like the king of the realm than driving your car up the front steps and into the lobby to the strains of Sunglasses at Night.



Too Cool!

16



DRIVE BY WITH A DIFFERENCE

Tony Hawk can only skitch, you can car surf.

Climb onto the roof of a slower vehicle and you can indulge in a spot of car surfing, taking down pedestrians as you glide magnificently past. See if you can leap from one vehicle to another in order to change direction.

Drive on the sidewalks in a heated chase as the police will throw stingers into the road to blow your tyres out.

17



IT HEARSE SO GOOD!

Coffin dodging in Two Bit Hit.

Your second mission for property tycoon Avery Carrington is straight out of a crime caper movie – think Cannonball Run but with Cuban gang wars and machine guns. Vercetti is sent to Little Havana to do a hit on a gang leader who owns a funeral parlour. On arrival you're met with a hail of bullets before your target makes off in a hearse. During the ensuing cross-city chase, the hearse ejects exploding coffins from the boot that'll set fire to your vehicle. You quite literally have to dodge death!

Discovered

18

COCKNEY REJECT

Meeting Kent Paul, we're not worthy.

Rockstar's spoof website www.kentpaul.com was the first contact anyone had with GTA: Vice City. Set up by Paul, "The name's Paul, but I'm from Kent, rather than being called Kent", he claimed to have, "discovered most of the bands popular in the eighties, but never got the credit." But what did Paul have to do with the game? Complete a couple of missions and your mobile rings... guess who it is? It's Kent Paul, the loveable cockney wideboy! He actually exists! Holed up in the Malibu Club, he provides some bombastic one-liners and plays host to a superb mullet.



19

SHIVER ME TIMBERS

More maritime amusement.

Head towards the docks and before the container ship on the left hand jetty you'll make out the aerial of a coast guard launch. Jump aboard and drive north east into the narrow canals. Pick any of the luxury yachts moored on the private jetties, retreat to a safe distance, prime the rocket launcher and blow it to pieces. Repeat to fade.



Too Cool!

Mission

20

GOLF WAR

Go on the rampage while dressed to the nines in your plus fours.

If you've seen Joel Schumacher's *Falling Down* you'll remember the scene where Michael Douglas threatens someone in a golf buggy, causing them to die of a heart attack - a classic nasty-but-funny movie moment. Well we took it a bit further. After, erm, 'acquiring' the buggy (five fatalities - but they were old anyway) we drove the buggy over the ramp near the club house and into town. It's difficult to stifle the laughter as you lay out hapless pedestrians with the Uzi while pootling along at the speed of a milk float. Needless to say we're doing this a lot. Probably too much.



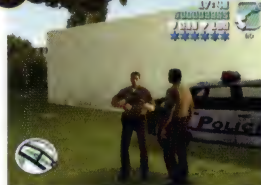
Too Cool!

Mission Impeccable!

24

Discovered

22



COP A LOAD OF THIS!

Outwit the law in Cop Land.

The final mission connected with Tommy's mansion is Cop Land, a combination of Tommy and Lance enticing two cops into a garage (by shooting stuff), stealing their uniforms and a car, then heading to the mall where there's an unexploded bomb. Your bomb. Fix the job, blow the coffee shop up and hightail it out of there. Whether you escape by outriving the cops, finding enough bribes to keep them off your tail or even switching cars and hitting the Pay 'N Spray, it's panic driving at its best. Just remember not to leave Lance behind. The idiot.



KEEPY UPPY

Take time out to play with your balls.

Just when you thought Vice City was all guns and violence, up pops a little recreational activity to keep you fit and on your toes. If you search the backyards and swimming pools of Starfish Island (this task is much easier if you're flying a helicopter) you'll find a few little surprises. One of which is an empty pool with a beachball in it. If you're unarmed, just run up to it and you'll give it a boot. Stay under the ball and the game will start to count your keepy-ups. It's a bit tricky to get the hang of at first, but makes a fantastic diversion to all that killing and maiming. On the head, Tommy son!

23

Too Cool!



COLLECTING CRUD DUDS

Yo! Nice tracky!

The ability to change outfits can help you escape a low wanted level, or just make you look good. You may want to start worrying though when you drive five minutes the wrong way just because you want to do the mission wearing a natty suit. Or better still, an old-skool maroon 'two stripe' tracksuit, found in the laundromat in Little Havana.

25

Too Cool!

SCRAMBLED OR FRIED?

Destruction derbies and more in the Hyman Stadium missions.

Depending on what time between 21:00 and 00:00 you enter it, the Hyman Memorial Stadium has a variety of activities on offer to you. One of which is the painfully titled Bloodring, a destruction derby type mini-game where the only thing between you and arena checkpoints is about 20 maniacs in bangers. Entertaining, if occasionally short-lived stuff. At other times you'll be able to practice your Sanchez action as the scrambler has a Kick Start-style track to navigate in the arena. Hearing the music over the tannoy system is a nice touch, too.



NAME YOUR VICE

Only for the dirty cheats among you, here's a fast track to some of Vice City's more outlandish treats.

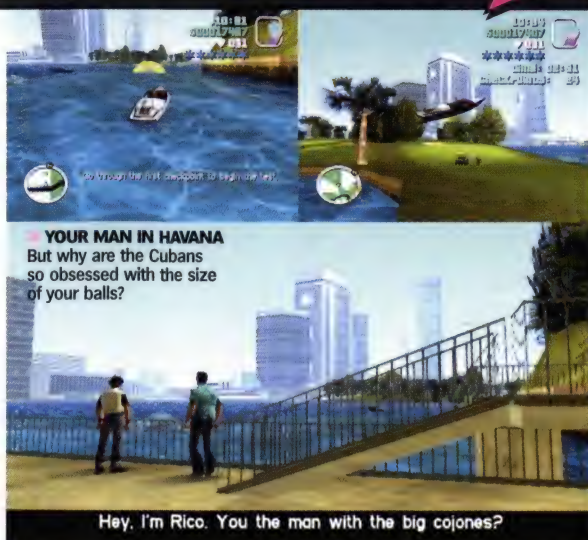
- Make all cars pink.....⓪, ⓪, ↓, ⓪, ←, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ←, ⓪
- Play as Love Fist.....↓, ⓪, ↓, ⓪, ←, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ×, ×
- Play as Candy Suxxx.....⓪, ⓪, ↓, ⓪, ←, →, ⓪, ⓪, ×, ⓪
- Unlock Rhino Tank.....⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪
- Unlock Love Fist's Limo.....⓪, ↑, ⓪, ←, ←, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, →
- Unlock Romero's Hearse.....↓, ⓪, ↓, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪
- Unlock the Hotring Racer.....⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ←, ⓪, ⓪, ←, ↑, ⓪, ⓪
- Unlock the Trashmaster.....⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ←, ←, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, →
- Attract a crowd everywhere... ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪
- Make cars float on water←, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪, ⓪

21

HAVANA BALL ON THE WATER

Prove to the Cubans that you've got big cojones in Stunt Boat Challenge.

The first mission you run for the Cuban café owner is a test of your manhood in a high-powered stunt boat. A tough driving challenge with plenty of ramps and tight bends, it requires expert control. Especially as you'll be distracted by a deranged gangster shouting in your ear that you "drive like a woman." When we did this mission, Kool And The Gang's *Summer Madness* came on the radio and the sun started shining. We could almost taste the salt on our lips, feel the sun on our skin and smell a dirty Cuban's cigar breath. Nice...



Mission Impeccable!



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Review Charter

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE's reviews are the best in the business. Our crack squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone else. And we absolutely love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion rather than a few cheap gags and some PR nonsense. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here and abroad. What's more, our writers have plenty of 'heritage' in the industry, having a collective history spanning into decades. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

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REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

- 10/10 Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 09/10 A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
- 08/10 Highly recommended
- 07/10 Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
- 06/10 Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
- 05/10 An average game
- 04/10 Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 03/10 Extremely disappointing
- 02/10 To be avoided
- 01/10 Beer mat

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.

GOLD
PlayStation 2

The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to PS2 games that score that magic 10/10. The only game to get Gold is MGS2. Too right!

SILVER
PlayStation 2

The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

media

DVD / MUSIC / MEDIA

DVD RELEASES.....082

Minority Report / Back to the Future (trilogy) / Vanilla Sky / Vampire Hunter D



MIDNIGHT CLUB 2.....062

After a shaky start, Rockstar's road racing series has finally hit top gear.

PRIMAL.....066

It's got a hot main character, knockout graphics and a dark demonic theme, but is that enough?

APE ESCAPE 2.....068

Can the hysterically funny PSone platformer wow us all again on PS2?

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE.....070

Who would have thought, a *Mortal Kombat* game that hardcore fighting game fans will like!

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078 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

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079 TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

080 NBA LIVE 2003

080 LMA 2003



It takes a little more to make a



MIDNIGHT CLUB 2

Rockstar, the video game industry's hottest company unleashes the latest incarnation of their popular racing franchise. *Midnight Club 2* is set to smoke.

PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR
DEVELOPER:
ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2 (8 WITH ONLINE)
OUT: FEBRUARY 14
WEBSITE:
WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/
MIDNIGHTCLUB2
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES

BACK STORY

Midnight Club was available when the PS2 was first launched around the world. While it received favourable reviews and was applauded by all gamers, it did not translate to the commercial success that was expected in Australia and other parts of the world. In the USA however, it went on to become one of the first games to go Platinum. Rockstar San Diego is the latest development arm to be added to the Rockstar family. *OPS2* hope to see Rockstar add a Rockstar Down Under office at some point in the near future!



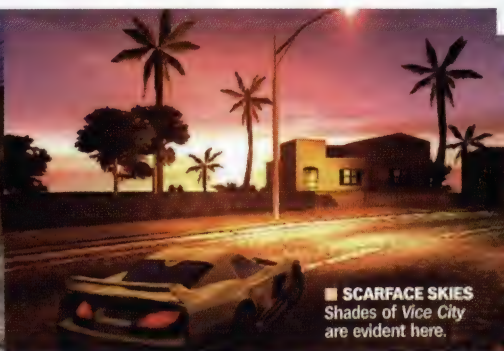
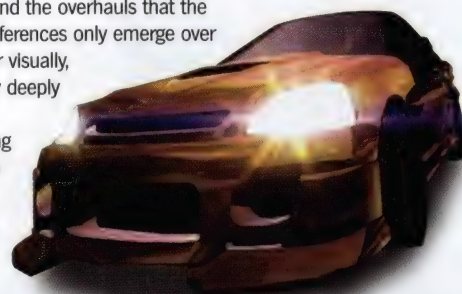
Up until now, little has been said about the impending release of *Midnight Club 2*. *OPS2* had been privy to exclusive information and we've published what we've been allowed to in previous issues, but Rockstar has generally been holding its cards close to their chest.

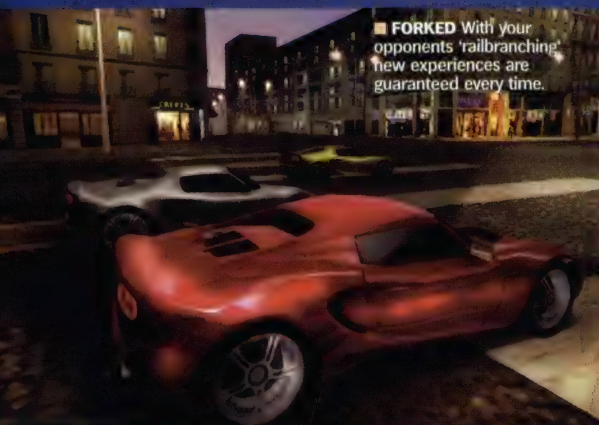
Midnight Club 2 has in fact, been in development for over two years – ever since the original was completed. Like all great sequels, *Midnight Club 2* doesn't just showcase minimal improvements over the original, it introduces key new gameplay features to make the experience one unique to its own. Of course, apart from awesome new elements (like 8-player multiplayer racing online and the slipstream boost), there is a whole new range of four (and two!) wheeled street weapons to keep all octane fiends satisfied.

More specifically, there are many crucial elements that have been added to this game that no other PS2 racer can boast. The game will now follow an involving story mode (much like the one in *V8 Supercar Race Driver*), uses slipstreaming as a key racing feature (like no other, but gives a similar speed sensation to *Burnout*), has non-linear and 'free' racing (only its sister game, *Smuggler's*

Run shares this), has further advanced opponent AI through the innovative 'Railbranching' technique; and the significant improvement in the game engine to allow you to race motorbikes against cars has never been realised with such accuracy. This blend of various games and the balance struck between arcade bliss and the urban grit of reality in the street-racing underworld makes one of the hottest racers to ever find its way onto the PS2 radar.

Unless you happen to be an ardent *Midnight Club* fan, it's highly unlikely that you'll immediately see the key differences between the original and sequel. Indeed, between the subtle changes and the overhauls that the game has had, most of the differences only emerge over time. They even appear similar visually, however you needn't look very deeply to see that *Midnight Club 2* features far superior shadowing and effects. It's generally not a spectacular game by any stretch, but some effects (like sparks, rain, super smooth frame rate and the sensation of speed) are particularly well





■ **FORKED** With your opponents 'railbranching' new experiences are guaranteed every time.

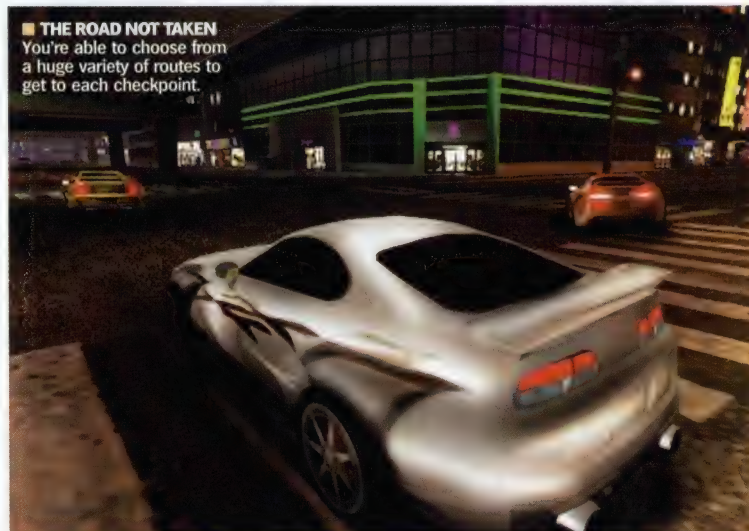
RACIN' FOR PINK SLIPS

Midnight Club 2 is takin' it to the world

Midnight Club 2 is a surely a game set to inspire rivalry in cyberspace. Play it on-line and pit your skills against international opponents! Australia are closer than ever to announcing their online plans and Sony have assured *OPS2* that we'll be the first source to get all the latest information. As soon as any new details come to hand, we'll give you a step-by-step guide on getting all your web-compatible PS2 games online. *Midnight Club 2* will definitely be one of the most adrenalin inducing titles available.



■ **BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY**
The lights and city scenery look fantastic.



■ **THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**
You're able to choose from a huge variety of routes to get to each checkpoint.

SMOKIN' ON THE STREETS

It all about layin' da rubber on da 'ways m' friend

All of Australia's major cities have an underground yet thriving street racing scene. Fast fours, rotaries and high-end Japanese bullets are all the rage and over the last decade have taken over from big Aussie and American V8 hotrods for the 'wheels of choice' amongst the octane inclined. While many cities and Car Clubs have introduced organised racing on dedicated tracks, there's still serious racing that goes down on the streets. Look for the hotspots every Friday and Saturday and you're sure to see some action. Go boys!



done and the neon signs of LA and Tokyo look fantastic.

The worlds and cars also feature new textures and lighting, giving the game a much cleaner look. At times, graphics can appear 'cartoony', so anyone with a penchant for more realistic cars and worlds (like *GT3*), should look elsewhere. With five car views, everyone's preferences are catered for but *OPS2* particularly favours the 'cinematic' camera, which moves closer and away from the car, depending on speed.

What sets *Midnight Club 2* apart from the rest of the pack is its freedom. Racing around a city may not be recognised as being blatantly groundbreaking, however the size and scope of where you can race is unmatched. For these reasons, it is unlike all other racers making comparisons difficult. At times though; it plays like *Burnout* and also shares subtle similarities with Capcom's new racer with online options *Auto Modellista*.

The story mode is one of the most immediately different aspects when advancing through single player game. *Midnight Club 2* has a very involving plotline with over 25 characters to encounter (many of which are recurring) and spans the cities of LA, Paris and Tokyo. Each character exhibits a unique driving style. You'll find some driving more aggressively where others will be more cautious and tactical.

As you may expect, you start the game with a clapped-out front wheel drive pocket rocket, but you'll soon be earning new cars by racing and beating opponents for their 'pink slips'. Effectively, this means that you get to keep their car and upgrades.

Midnight Club 2 isn't a game about improving your car's components and earning add-ons per se. The reward system is about straight car upgrades and increasing your 'respect' amongst the racing fraternity. Earning the final 'Veloc' car is certainly worth it and burning the nitro on the fly with this machine is simply breathtaking. That baby is fast. Real fast. *Damn!*

As it's not strictly a 'racing' game, *Midnight Club 2* has been jokingly referred to as being a "Car-PG". Without revealing all, we will say that the plot revolves heavily around a girl... Cars and girls? Two critical ingredients on the street-racing scene!

Despite the fact that none of the cities are true replicas of their real world counterparts, they are intricate in detail and designed specifically for racing. However, the more prominent and famous landmarks have been included. *OPS2* saw the familiar sites of Santa Monica, Hollywood Hills, and the Convention Centre and LAX in LA, Paris had noticeably more alleys and unmapped secret passages; while Tokyo is a city full of high-speed motorways and overpasses. Throughout the game you'll encounter challenges with good, long straights as well as courses identifiable by their web of alleys and back streets.

Despite the enormity of the levels, checkpoints are strategically positioned giving constant interaction with other racers. Often, opponents will even come flying up the street in the opposite direction! Following them doesn't exactly help however. The best way to success is utilising cruise mode to work out the best routes.

The premise of shortcuts makes up a huge element when playing *Midnight Club 2*. Learning the 'streets' themselves is integral, and Rockstar San Diego were careful in placing plenty of emphasis here to re-create the real world culture of street racers who pride themselves on knowing the roads. As you unlock the game and explore different areas more and more massive jumps are revealed. Without finding them all, clearing areas and successfully completing tracks and winning races becomes impossible. We're sure you'll love smashing through glass and flying through sections of buildings the best just like we did. Uncovering them (at first they may just look like shiny walls) becomes all part of the adventure. When in the air, you're able to control the car's pitch for successful

It takes a little more to make a



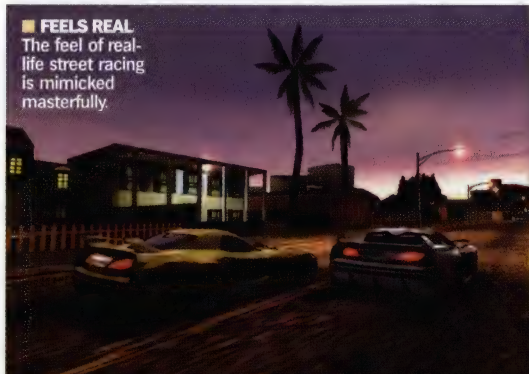
■ **CLEAN-CUT MC2** is much cleaner and sharper than its pacey predecessor.



■ **LAND OF THE FLYING RUN** Expect huge speeds in Tokyo.



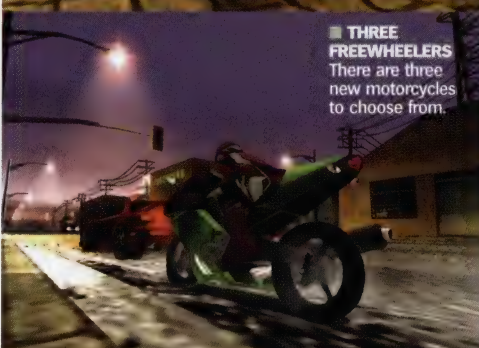
■ **EMPHASISED EVASION** Escaping from authority holds far more emphasis in this version.



■ **FEELS REAL**
The feel of real-life street racing is mimicked masterfully.



■ **BUZZBOX**
You start off with small front-wheel drive machines.



■ **THREE FREEWHEELERS**
There are three new motorcycles to choose from.

landings and this particularly gives a distinct 'arcade' feel.

While it certainly plays with strong arcade aspects, *Midnight Club 2* is simultaneously very demanding tactically. Car choice is crucial, and then of course, are the in-race tactics. So rather than mastering tracks and working out the fastest way to shave seconds through the apex of each chicane and corner, you have to learn each city better than your own neighbourhood. With railbranching, getting to Point A and Point B will require something new every single time. Despite its obvious 'pick up and play' and arcade tendencies, *Midnight Club 2* is in many respects a thinking man's racer.

Car selection becomes an increasingly strategic affair in the latter stages of the game. There are 28 cars and while one car may seem clearly more powerful than the rest – manoeuvrability, size and acceleration are crucial on some of the courses. Like most racers, the handling differs greatly between cars but they have done a superb job on the car physics right across the game. Any race fan that loves their 'powersliding' will instantly take to *Midnight Club 2*. The game features some of the most impressive controlled power slides ever seen in a game.

The three newly-introduced motorbikes make *Midnight Club 2* a standout affair over the original. They feel superb and open up new aspects of gameplay, enabling you to fly down alleyways that some of the

wider cars would struggle to squeeze through.

Adapting to the motorbikes' turning circles can take some getting used to, but the shoulder buttons are also used so that the rider drops their knee for sharper turning and to 'flick' your machine quickly around corners. Similarly, the cars also now feature two-wheeled tricks, so you can get your car up on two wheels where required. Alleys? No problem! Now that's precision driving at its best!

The rider animations on the bikes look fantastic, making the idea of flying through city streets at insane speeds far more conceivable. Re-positioning yourself on the bike looks subtle but effective, and when you get thrown after a big collision you'll be thankful you're not getting the pain as well.

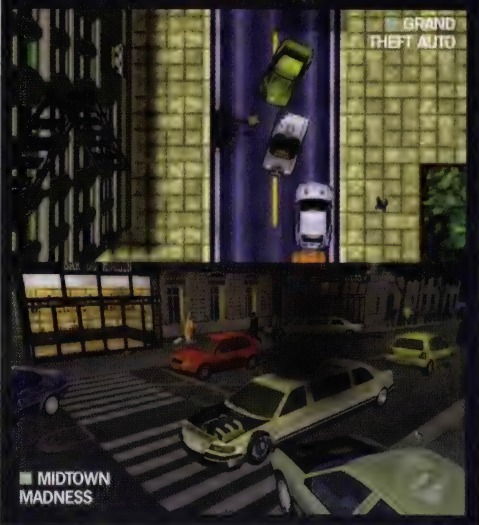
Featuring all city-based street courses means that traffic and pedestrians are a real affair. Rockstar San Diego have concentrated a lot on getting the 'balance' and amount of traffic right. Cars and trucks move around the city, making a 'living' world full of obstacles. Pedestrians do exist, however they aren't solid when you try and collide with them! This lapse in realism is not crucial, but *OPS2* thinks that it's a missed opportunity that would have certainly added to the game.

Drafting is yet another very important element that's been introduced. By following cars closely, you build up the slipstream meter and the effect is similar

MIDNIGHT MADNESS

This new racer is a true thoroughbred!

Rockstar San Diego (formerly Angel Studios) have an excellent heritage when it comes to the racing genre and a host of their previous games introduced new elements to racing games which are, of course, traditionally 'track based'. Indeed the freedom of *Midnight Club 2* and *Smuggler's Run* are unparalleled.



■ **MIDTOWN MADNESS**



■ CITY OF LIGHT
Virtual Paris is bursting with atmosphere.

■ PORKY
Burn rubber now to make smoked bacon.



■ YOU'RE NOT ALONE
You'll have to share the roads with hot competition.



■ WHICH WHEELS?
Choosing a bike over a car is a major strategy on some courses.



to a massive nitrous boost. This slingshot effect needs to be mastered and timing them correctly will see you blitzing the field.

The damage meter also indicates how far you are from destroying your ride. Cars and bikes appear with real damage after bumps and dingles, and it finally culminates in vehicles catching on fire.

The most exciting aspect of *Midnight Club 2* is the online component. As only the second racer (behind *Auto Modellista*) to go online, it gets our nod as being superior. As PC gamers have testified for years, the lifespan is improved no end and there is no limit to how long you will enjoy the game. There's no better feeling in gaming than taking on someone in an international showdown and beating them to the chequered flag. Now that Sony are inching closer to finalising all online details, we'll be able to enjoy taking on people on the other side of the world and country just as Americans have already been enjoying since late last year.

Rockstar have opted out of 4-player split screen mode, although the game will be i.Link compatible meaning that four players can race using 2 PS2s and two TVs. Without an i-link and second PS2, 2-player split screen is standard. Rockstar claim that even though four-player mode is easily achievable, they simply elected not to include it as they believe the screens appear too small to be enjoyable. Multiplayer battles can be customised, allowing you to determine variables like the course, checkpoints, weather and amount of traffic. They're not just straight out races either, with full Battle modes like Capture the Flag available.

As previously mentioned, railbranching allows opponent racers to behave differently every single time. This new AI trick means that computer opponents will take different routes and behave differently every single time. The aim is to give players a unique experience with each game and

■ CITY SLICKER
The cars are so slick and shiny, you never have to wash them...



■ COP AN EYE FULL
Authentic scenery greets your peepers.



OPS2 can testify that it works a treat. After hours of replaying various levels and watching AI behaviour closely, not once did the racers follow set patterns.

In keeping within true essence of real street racers, evading authority is another element that's been addressed. This is integral to the plotline and many of the challenges involve escaping from the long arm of the law. Better still, police pursuits give amazing variety every time as the police cars also 'railbranch'. Now that's almost as scary the thought of having your beloved Datto defected!

It's difficult to say that this racer is superior to *GT* as they are so vastly different. Without doubt, *Midnight Club 2* deserves plenty of attention and should be recognised for all it has achieved and the features it has brought to the racing genre. The game successfully captures the lifestyle of race culture and it's comprehensive in the treatment and quality of the gaming.

Gameplay is undeniably enjoyable and the online component is superb. If any criticism can be directed, we'd suggest that the visual aesthetics aren't at a premium. However, it's much faster and better in every way than the original and the plethora of new features make it one of the most exciting racers to be released this year. We'll be seeing you online. ☐ **Richie Young**

MIDNIGHT CLUB 2

Why we'd buy it:

- The online racing alone makes this worth its ticket price.
- Unmatched freedom is fantastic.

Why we'd leave it:

- Fans of ultra realism will be the only ones disappointed

Graphics	Better than the original but nothing amazing	07
Sound	Great techno soundtrack and huge host of engine grunts	08
Gameplay	Frantic racing across famous cities. Great handling	09
Life span	The online component will make this baby last forever	09

Only Rockstar's *GTA* games can boast more freedom than this excellent on-line racer. Be sure to check it out.

08

OFFICIAL VERDICT

PRIMAL

... Or the epic adventures of Goth Chick and the Gargoyle.

PUBLISHER: SCEE
DEVELOPER: SCEE CAMBRIDGE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: 7 FEBRUARY
WEBSITE: WWW.PRIMALGAME.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES

BACK STORY

SCEE made big an impact on the PSone with their comical Medevil title. Primal is their attempt at a "darker, more serious" game that takes full advantage of PS2's hardware capabilities.



Fade in: A smoke choked night club. Sweaty youngsters jump and gyrate to the angsty wallings of the Nu Metal band on stage. A lone, tall, red eyed figure stares at the band's tattooed lead singer, Lewis, with quiet menace. Outside, after the gig, in a seedy back alley this figure reveals itself to be something much more than an obsessed fan and something much less than human. The creature beheads a bouncer, snatches Lewis and knocks over the singer's buxom, red PVC-clad girlfriend. She hits the ground, hard, and sinks into the inky depths of a coma.

So begins *Primal*, the ambitious, dark, fantasy adventure from SCEE. The story focuses around Jen, the afore mentioned buxom one, and her search for Lewis. The fact she's unconscious and lying in a hospital bed doesn't hinder the quest as her astral body is as lively as it is well proportioned. Guiding Jen along the astral plane and into strange Daemonic realms is Scree, a pint-sized stone gargoyle who sounds like an irritable English butler.

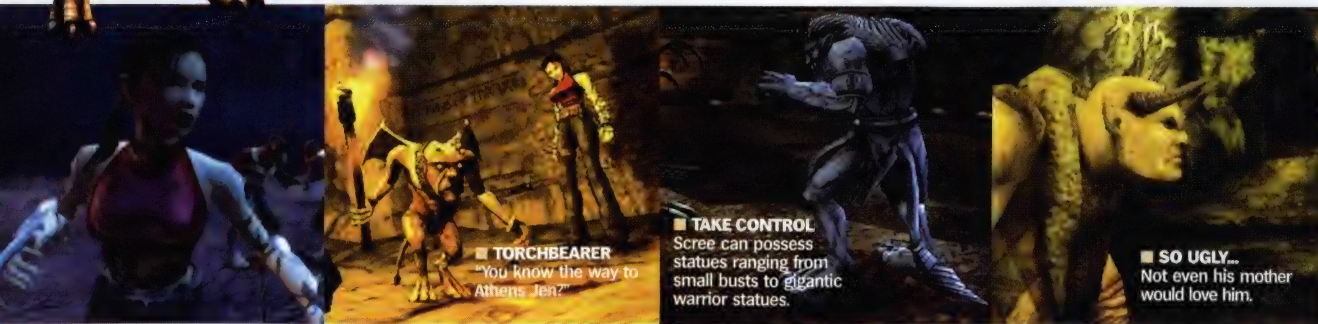
The first thing to note about *Primal* is that it looks fantastic. The opening FMV sequence alone is almost worth the price of admission but it doesn't stop there. The realms that Jen and Scree explore are varied and massive. Towering mountains, gushing waterfalls, expansive snowy vistas and aquatic gardens all appear in the numerous worlds that need to be traversed. The creatures that inhabit these lands also look great, ranging from jackal-like cave dwellers to eerle spindly wraiths. Credit must be given to SCEE for the amount of effort they've put into this title's look and for taking full advantage of the PS2's next-gen capabilities.

Another one of *Primal*'s appealing aspects is the fact that you can control both of the main characters. A simple press of the select button and you're either the hot goth girl or the grumpy gargoyle. The obvious character favourite would be Jen, but as the game progresses a symbiotic relationship between the two characters develops and it's important to be skilled in using them both. For instance, Jen can take on the demonic powers of the creatures in each realm. She transforms into said demon and can wield weapons ranging from glowing green claws to a bright electric purple whip. Consequently she is the person to look to when a combat situation presents itself. Scree's abilities are slightly more esoteric but no less valuable. He can drain the energy from felled enemies which Jen can then channel into her depleting demonic power bar. Also Scree is useful in that he can climb most stone surfaces. This allows him to scout ahead and help access areas that Jen can't reach. His most interesting ability, however, is the ability to possess statues. Most of the time this involves the little tyke controlling the head of a stone bust to open a door or similar but other times the results can be quite spectacular. The boss battle that occurs in a large Colosseum type arena between a gigantic demon and a huge statue that Scree controls is testament to the creativity at work behind the development of this game.

So we have jaw dropping visuals, creative game elements and an interesting plot. Sounds like a total winner, right? Unfortunately the gameplay doesn't quite show the same level of loving care as the rest of the



■ **FLASH AND GASH**
Blood and pyrotechnic battle effects aplenty.



■ **TORCHBEARER**
"You know the way to Athens Jen?"

■ **TAKE CONTROL**
Scree can possess statues ranging from small busts to gigantic warrior statues.

■ **SO UGLY...**
Not even his mother would love him.



■ **S'NOT GOOD** "Get this demon a hanky!"



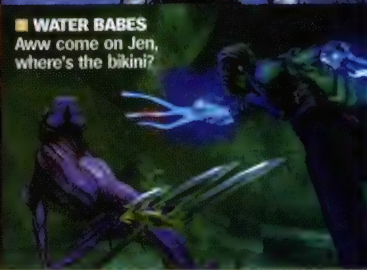
■ **DEVILISHY HANDSOME** The character and monster models are amazing.



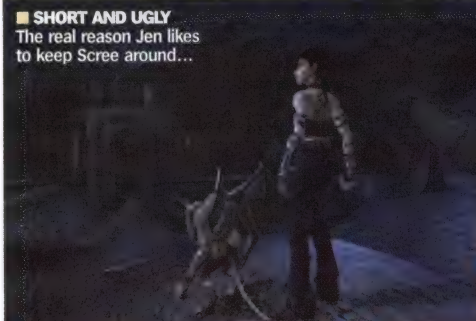
■ **ONLY HUMAN** A much less formidable, but infinitely prettier Jen.



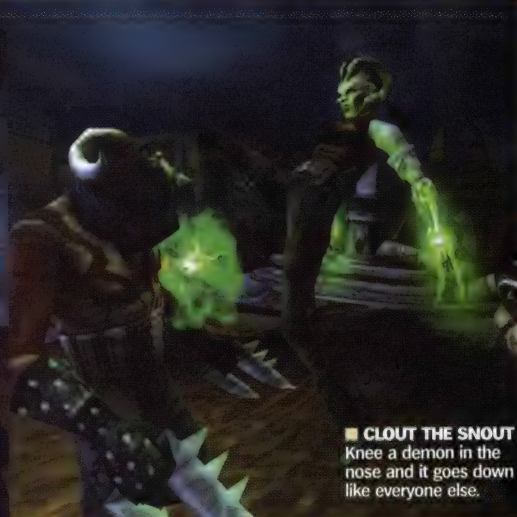
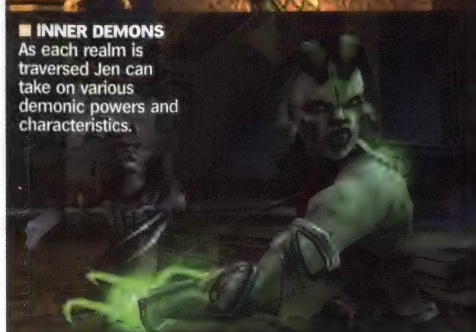
■ **WATER BABES** Aww come on Jen, where's the bikini?



■ **SHORT AND UGLY** The real reason Jen likes to keep Scree around...



■ **INNER DEMONS** As each realm is traversed Jen can take on various demonic powers and characteristics.



■ **CLOUT THE SNOOT** Knee a demon in the nose and it goes down like everyone else.

package. There is an annoying "context" based system to the gameplay which means you'll only be able to jump when you come to something you can jump off and you'll only be able to use your weapons when there's a battle to be fought. Certainly this sounds logical but what it means is that you tend to spend a great deal of time wandering around looking for a 'jump', 'explore' or 'fight' context. Sometimes it's fun to be able to jump and swing your weapon for practice or just for the Hell of it and the inability to do so is almost claustrophobically restrictive. In worlds this massive it would be nice to be able to let off some steam and whale on a tree or surly looking rock once in a while. The only people who might stand to benefit from this system are novices who truly need things kept simple.

The camera movement also often seems sadistically inclined to give you the exact opposite POV to the one

you want. It's nice that Scree can walk up walls but the fact that you tend to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to work out which way is up or down when he does so somewhat taints the appeal of the experience. The combat is another sore point. Sure it looks great, what with Jen's sparking, flaying weaponry and growling demonic visage, but the moves can often feel haphazard and accidental and the overall battle engine becomes quite repetitive over time. It's great that Jen can adopt different demonic modes and switch from one to another at will, but there's only so many times you can beat off identical hordes of monsters without yearning for some extra combat depth.

While it's mostly enjoyable, overall *Primal* is simply a project that bites off more than it can chew. Its wildly uneven quality will send players on an emotional rollercoaster from excited awe to irritation to frustrated boredom and back again. *Primal* looks and sounds like the adventure game you've always been waiting for, but an unnecessarily rigid game engine stops this from being the masterpiece it should be. □ **Anthony O'Connor**

PRIMAL

Why we'd buy it:

- It's like *Soul Reaver 2*'s prettier sister game.
- It looks and sounds fantastic.
- It's very long with lots to do.
- Unique two character system.

Why we'd leave it:

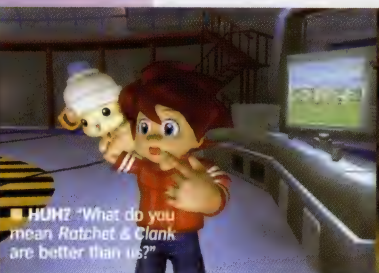
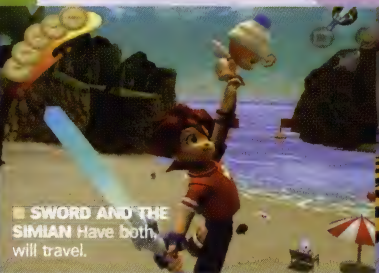
- The gameplay's limitations can be frustrating.
- Lack of combat variety makes fights repetitive.
- Buggy camera work

Graphics	Beautiful, big and varied. Very tidy work indeed.	03
Sound	Atmospheric sound with slightly wooden voice acting.	08
Gameplay	Frustrating "context" based rigidity grows tiresome.	06
Life span	Huge and varied worlds with lots to do.	08

A solid, engaging, epic adventure title that is unfortunately let down by a needlessly restrictive and frustrating game engine.

07

OFFICIAL VERDICT



APE ESCAPE 2

Those cheeky monkeys are going bananas again

PUBLISHER: SCE
DEVELOPER: SONY
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1 (2 FOR MINI GAMES)
OUT: NOW
WEB SITE: WWW.APEESCAPE2.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO

BACK STORY

Sony released the original Ape Escape for PSone in 1999. With its myriad of gadgets and innovative Dual Shock controls, the game was ahead of its time. It was huge in Japan, but sadly didn't get the recognition and massive sales it deserved in the West, despite a 9/10 review in Official Australian PlayStation Magazine.

They have opposable thumbs. They share 99 percent of our genes. They like bananas. And they're running riot again in this superb 3D net 'em up...

The original Ape Escape was a showcase for the newly released Dual Shock controller. Far more than a novelty item, it was one of the best platformers ever released. Ape Escape's innovative use of gadgets and the analog thumb sticks, plus it's "gotta catch 'em all" hide-and-seek gameplay made for a refreshing and unique spin on the tired platforming genre. Few gamers who played it didn't instantly fall in mad monkey love, but sales were a little disappointing for such a high quality and innovative title.

Ape Escape 2 doesn't innovate nearly as much second time around, but includes everything that made the original so much fun, plus some new gadgets and prettier visuals. Hopefully it will achieve a much bigger audience as well as letting fans go bananas all over again.

The monkeys in Ape Escape are not your usual fairground attractions. They're mean, they're nasty, and some even wield guns. They're out to rewrite history and bring mankind down a few steps on the food chain. Specter, a tough little monkey and zoo escapee, is once

again building an ape army with intelligence enhancing helmets. It's up to new hero Hikaru and his little furry (and useless) mate Pipotchi to save the day. Fortunately you've got plenty of toys from the Professor to play with, including some new gadgets, and helpful advice from the Prof's spunky granddaughter.

If you haven't had the joy of playing Ape Escape before, you'll discover the two analog sticks are brilliantly utilised. The left stick controls the movement of your character, while the right stick controls the tools and gadgets, like the net which you must use to bag the apes. You can run in one direction and swipe your net in another. You can also press down to make the kid crawl, useful for sneaking up behind monkeys. The system sounds complicated but is actually highly intuitive, and even young kids can quickly get a handle on it.

It's the many and varied gadgets that make the game so much fun to play. The standards are the Stun Club for whacking enemies, the Net for catching monkeys and the Net Shooter which doubles as an underwater propulsion unit and fires nets when underwater. More advanced gadgets include the Monkey Radar for locating apes, the Catapult which can shoot three types of bullets, the Dash Hoop for protection and speedy running, and the Sky



HOW TO...

TEACH AN ASEXUAL YELLOW BLOB A LESSON





DRUNKMONKEY
Scenes from OPS2's
2002 Christmas party.



SPACE APE
Okay, now we've
seen it all.



WHAT IS IT?
They'd never seen a
nose before.



JUST A GAME No
apes were captured in
the making of AE2.



Flyer for soaring into the air. New gadgets include the Bananarang, which has a tasty banana aroma to lure monkeys, the Water Cannon for dousing flames and turning water wheels, and the Electro Magnet for moving or clinging to metal items. But everyone's favourite will remain the radio-controlled car, which can be used to pick up items, lure apes and hit switches.

Our only gripe with the gadgets is that there's little freedom to use them creatively. The puzzles are remedial in their simplicity, obviously to ensure the game appeals to a young audience. If there's a switch that needs covering, there will be a box right next to it, complete with a handprint painted on the side in case you didn't realise you could push it. We would have liked the game to offer more head-scratching inducing challenges, as the kiddies could have been assisted with helpful hints from Pipotchi if needed.

There are also fun vehicles to pilot. Early on you'll get to jump in a submarine and even strap yourself into a powerful Mech. Later there's a hilarious tank complete with powerful arsenal. Meanwhile a rowing boat causes much frustration for players and much amusement for onlookers, with one controller stick controlling each oar.

The levels rehash many platformer stereotypes – snow, haunted house, pyramids, industrial, jungle, volcano, etc. Many are also re-workings of levels found in the original, like the beach and Jurassic stages. But there is plenty to do, with over 20 levels to explore and eight boss battles to complete. And there are some excellent stages, like a Vegas-styled casino, a gorgeous citadel, and an intense level called "Enter the Monkey" where a large pack of simians are doing martial arts. When you enter the fray with net swinging, the apes scurry in all directions.

The designers have worked hard to give maximum replay value. You can progress to the next level with a set number of monkeys found, but there's always more to find on a later visit, along with plenty of pick-ups. Exploring is a delight rather than a chore. Coins allow

access to the brilliant sub-games, as well as hundreds of other items like soundtracks, hilarious monkey fables and concept art. You can also return to finished levels to record a best time for catching all the monkeys.

The crazy apes add a lot of humour to the game. The designers obviously had a lot of fun making a monkey of many popular culture icons. There are gags everywhere and using the radar to spy on unaware apes is hilarious. The funky gibbons wear all manner of outfits, and even have individual statistics like alertness, aggression and speed. You'll discover monkey matadors, soldiers, traffic cops, pirates, disco dancers, knights, clowns, ninja, and even monkey skiers. The boss battles are particularly memorable thanks to the bizarre characters – watch out for the simian pop starlet, she's got to be one of the most bizarre bosses ever to appear in a videogame.

Fun gadgets combined with superb attention to detail make this a very entertaining platformer for all ages. With the likes of *Jak & Daxter*, *Ratchet & Clank* and *Sly Raccoon*, this mightn't be the King Kong of platformers on PS2, but if you get your paws on a copy you're certain to go ape over it. **Jason Hill**



APE ESCAPE 2		
Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	
- Loads of brilliant gadgets to tinker with	- Camera can occasionally annoy	
- Monkey mayhem and personality galore	- Basic puzzles	
- Monkey Football is superb fun	- Too similar to the original	
Graphics	Nothing astonishing but excellent attention to detail	07
Sound	Average music but good voiceover	06
Gameplay	Variety galore, and monkeying around is heaps of fun	09
Life span	Potentially endless entertainment with all the extras	09
Monkey business has never been so much fun. Go bananas with one of the best platformers around.		
08 OFFICIAL VERDICT		



BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

Kicks, katanas... and klaret. Welcome back Mortal Kombat.

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
DEVELOPER: MIDWAY (CHICAGO)
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT: 14 FEBRUARY
WEB SITE:
WWW.MKDEADLYALLIANCE.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO

BACK STORY

The Mortal Kombat franchise will be well-known to anyone who ever visited an arcade in the early nineties or owned Sega's MegaDrive. Its 2D focus was essentially an Achilles heel when it tried to compete with the likes of Tekken and Virtua Fighter. But Midway's Chicago division took on the challenge of updating and revamping the scrapping series and this all-singing, all-dancing, bloody new version is the result.



Let's make one thing clear from the start: we're not here to talk about the terrible *Mortal Kombat* movie, its terrible sequel, the terrible cartoon series or the terrible lunchbox and flask set. We're here to talk

about the latest incarnation of the very first blood, guts, vomit-and-all fighting game on PS2. The *Mortal Kombat* series wasn't only spelt with attitude, oh no. The games boasted near-the-knuckle content guaranteed to start one of those, 'This is going straight back to the shops, mister' conversations across the dinner table. But we've all grown up now and, thankfully, so has *Mortal Kombat* in the blood-soaked form of *Deadly Alliance*.

Those who are not familiar with the goings on in Outworld, Earthrealm and the Netherrealm need know only that our plane of existence is hungrily sought after by wizards, demons and badasses galore from alternate dimensions. Due to strict rules set in stone by the elemental gods, the only way these creatures can gain access to our world is by defeating our representatives in a tournament – welcome to *Mortal Kombat*.

Previous participants (and losers) Shang Tsung and the exiled Quan Chi are the aggressors this time. They have escaped imprisonment, killed the dark Outworld's Emperor and our own champion, Liu Kang. Now they have their sights set on defeating the greatest warriors, grabbing their souls to resurrect the Dragon Lord's army and becoming invincible overlords. Enter our old mate and thunder god, Raiden, and a selection of heroes all ready to counter the villainous sluggers of the Deadly Alliance in furious, offal-filled, beat-'em-up action.

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

You begin with a choice of 12 fighters ranging from old favourites Sub Zero, Scorpion, Sonya Blade and Johnny Cage to less familiar characters like Kenshi 'The Blind Swordsman'. Each has a good, evil or neutral alignment which seems to determine

how they look rather than how they act. The first thing that strikes you (whether you choose to train your fighter in the Practice arena until your knuckles turn to jelly or throw yourself straight into the Arcade mode) is that this game is no limp revamp. From the sweep of a katana to the spatter of ichor, *MK:DA* looks and sounds fabulous throughout. Beautifully rendered characters fill the game, each with liquid-smooth fighting moves and attitudes expressed through accurately mapped body movements. Vaguely normal-looking human characters like Sonya or Kung Lao mix it up with the more freaky inhabitants. The monstrous Moloch and the acid-belching Reptile represent a pantomime world that's garishly brought to life. Unlike the *Tekken* series, the focus is kept firmly on the fighting itself. Plenty of the foes you encounter are unlocked as you go – you'll build up quite a stable to dip into, including the metal-armed Jaxx, cyborg Cyrax, cold-shouldered Frost and the lovely, mysterious, Kitana.

What do you mean, 'Get to the fighting!'? We're there already. Most fighting games are firmly rooted in the real world of martial arts and despite appearances, *MK:DA* is no exception. Its dedication to the fighting arts produces a game that looks and plays in a truly satisfying way. It's all very well to freeze or electrocute someone (don't worry, that's all still possible) but to take an opponent down with a well-practised Aikido throw or Tae Kwon Do kick is about as close as many of us will ever get to being a tough guy. Each character is endowed with three faithfully recreated fighting styles which you can toggle between at any time using **LB**. Characters have a long-distance style, a close-combat style and a weapon style – many of the featured weapons can also be thrust into enemies with the **RB** button. Li Mai's Sai or Frost's daggers are particularly satisfying to plunge deep into an opponent's knee caps, slowly draining them of blood.

In many 3D beat-'em-ups there's a tendency to tire of the fighters' moves after a while. But the three forms allotted to each *MK* character will take time to perfect in



EXTRA
TIME

SALES FROM THE KRYPT
You may be spending plenty of time and kurrency in the Krypt. To save you aimlessly wandering in the aisles browsing for bargains, here's OPS2's pick of what's on offer.



LI MEI'S BIKINI OUTFIT: KOFFIN KX
1406 Sapphire Koins
Crikey. Clearly a little hot under the collar, Li Mei strips down to this revealing number to do battle. It makes it a little hard to keep your eyes on the kombat at times.



FROST: KOFFIN IV
208 Ruby Koins
Cheap at twice the price, this icy lady is one of the first new characters you can unlock. She's fun to control and her hair's pretty crazy, too.



COOKING WITH SCORPION: KOFFIN UI
270 Silver Koins
Oh, the comedy. This spoof trailer shows just what happens when grog finds it's way into games development. How they must have laughed.



FACIAL ANIMATION TEST: KOFFIN ZG
201 Onyx Koins
Not the most expensive item out there, but a good example of the concept artwork that's up for grabs. It only shows Reptile's expressions but what did you expect for that price?





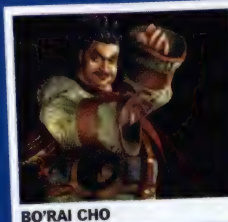
ROLL CALL
KNOW YOUR FOE
 Get to know some of MK:DA's colourful cast. There's not much time for chat when you're kicking them in the mush.



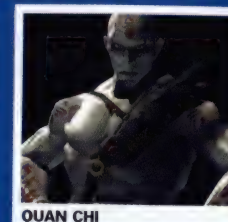
KENSHI
 Kenshi's allegiance is neutral as he's a free agent sent from Earthrealm on a search for Cyrax who becomes trapped in Outworld. His strengths are telekinesis and a big sword.



MAVADO
 Leader of a warrior clan in Earthrealm, Mavado joins with the Deadly Alliance. His Long Fist and Hook Sword abilities are very effective. Looking a bit like Elvis doesn't hurt either.



BO'RAI CHO
 While he may look like a big fat drunk he's actually the Shaolin master who trained the now deceased Earthrealm champion, Liu Kang. He's in this for revenge... and the free booze.



QUAN CHI
 This pasty-faced fella's not to be trifled with. His main speciality is double-teaming with Shang Tsung. But he also does a nice sideline in neck pulling and lobbing burning skulls around.



open combat. Opponents can also switch disciplines in the middle of combinations, kicking your ass in one style, then another and finally gutting you like a fish before you've had the chance to find the **13** button to defend yourself. Give them an inch and they'll take a mile... or a several pints of your blood.

FATAL ATTRACTION

One of the most widely anticipated aspects of any *Mortal Kombat* game is the range of Fatalities. We're here to tell you that, while there's only one per character, they don't disappoint. There are brains being ripped out, blood being puked up, electrocutions and decapitations, severe neck trauma and even the odd belly flop. Such a variety of ways to 'finish' off your victim and none of them very sportsmanlike. It's another incentive, if one were needed, to thoroughly trounce your opponent. Before long, you'll find yourself twiddling buttons like a madman screaming, "Rip his spine out Sub Zero! Rip it out!" at the top of your lungs.

Controlling the offensive action is a matter of positioning yourself with the D-pad then using the basic shoulder and action buttons to unleash fighting moves and combinations. But it's in the Konquest (story) mode that you'll get to grips with most of the controls. With 218 missions divided up amongst all of the characters there's no better place to learn. However, there's a unique structure and a strange mixture of game elements here that doesn't always work. A cut-scene here or there, in place of the easily-skippable game text, could have spiced up what is essentially a challenge-based tutorial and a more illustration could have given the characters a little more... character.

Konquest challenges consist of hitting a sequence of buttons that appear in the top right-hand corner of the screen. This is not always as simple as it sounds; you need to perfect each character's Style Branch – a single combination of up to eight buttons that cycles through the three distinct styles – before you can face a final challenge against the character that you've chosen. Unfortunately, after a few goes, it's fairly easy to predict exactly what you'll have to do next. You simply obey the button commands then move on – no mastery or commitment to memory is necessary. A little more variation would have made this mode feel like a worthy game in its own right, rather than a tarted-up beginner's level. It's worth visiting to familiarise yourself with the potential of each character, but it's ultimately one for the completists out there.

The other main gameplay chunk is the Arcade mode. This offers nothing shocking in terms of innovation, but is an increasingly challenging journey towards showdowns with Quan Chi and Shang Tsung. Completion leads to a brief movie, the content of which depends on the character you finish the game with and the alignment they have. This mode is also interspersed with welcome strength and memory challenges which break up the constant killing.

KURRENCY KONVERTER

The MK road is long and hard, but if you stick with the same character, you'll gain a lot of experience along the way. The option to change characters after a defeat is a welcome solution to countering rising blood pressure, but it allows players to circumvent the flaws in a fighter's skills rather than having to improve them in order to advance. Take Moloch, for example. For some characters, it's distinctly more difficult to avoid his powerful forward attacks. But with Mavado or Kenshi's sidestep sword moves, the lumbering monster's a big pussycat. Whether or not you'll spend the time discovering and perfecting your favourite character's own sidestep move, rather than simply switching hitters, whacking **13**, and taking his legs out with a weapon, is entirely your call.

So why undertake this mammoth task? Why traipse through the Konquest or get your poor, beautifully rendered face mashed to a pulp in the Arcade mode? Money. Pure and simple. You see, *MK:DA*'s world revolves around the use of 'currency' which can be earned in everything from two-player contests to completing levels and challenges. By completing as much of the game as possible, you can save up your, er, kash and visit the Krypt (a kind of big, coffin-filled shopping mall). There are 675 purchases to be made here with your money and items range from new characters to outfits, videos and concept art. You might find this part gimmicky – particularly because you won't know what you're buying until the casket is open. But there's undeniably a huge amount in there to explore, adding yet another dimension to the game (even if you do save up for a new character only to end up with Jaxx's 'alternative outfit').

Like or loathe the violent content, *Mortal Kombat* is, without a shadow of a doubt, back with a bang – or, more accurately, back with sickening squelches and the drip, drip of blood. It retains everything that fans will know and love but has enough innovation, style and quality to bowl over any fight-obsessed gamer. Its accuracy and attention to martial arts action is its major strength. But its lack of true depth (particularly in the story line) could be a potential spoiler for what is otherwise one of the more distinctive and distinguished fighting games to have emerged on PS2. ☐ Mark Wyatt

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

Why we'd buy it:

- Superb 3D fighting action
- The fatalities are still good and suitably grisly
- We always wanted to imprison someone's soul

Why we'd leave it:

- Its tight focus on bashing faces in may get tiring
- Konquest mode lacks depth
- Couldn't they have come up with a better story by now?

Graphics	Blood and guts, facial damage, great physical effects	08
Sound	Spatter, smash, clang, trickle and ooze. Bad music	07
Gameplay	Cathartic and innovative beat-em-up action	08
Life span	Plenty to learn and unlock	07

A triumphant return. A truly individual and spectacular-looking game, only held back by its specialist appeal and lack of depth.

08

OFFICIAL VERDICT



FRANTIC Be it racing in cars or running for your life, the pace of the game is consistently zippy.



BARREL CHEST You've got to improvise to avoid poisonous darts.



SLASH 'N' GRAB All enemies can be hacked with your hook for bonus coins.



SLY RACCOON

Can a sticky-fingered raccoon rob Ratchet & Clank of its platform crown?

PUBLISHER: SCE
DEVELOPER: SUCKER PUNCH
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.SUCKERPUNCH.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO

BACK STORY

Something of a fledgling in the gaming world, Sucker Punch's only other game was Rocket: Robot On Wheels on the N64, but since then, the company has thrown all its resources into PS2 development. Sly Raccoon was released in America last year under the unwieldy name of Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus. Fortunately got an abbreviation here.



BEYOND SLY RACCOON'S CAPTIVATING LOOKS, THERE'S PRECIOUS LITTLE HERE THAT HASN'T BEEN DONE BEFORE



Games, like any form of popular culture, tend to go through fashions. Take 'Bullet Time' for example. Ever since *The Matrix* came out, everything from *Max Payne* to *Tony Hawk's*

Pro Skater 4 has ripped off this feature to varying degrees of success (the irony now is that *Enter The Matrix* is announced just as 'Bullet Time' in games seems old hat). Another current 'trend' is cel-shading. In case you aren't familiar with this technique, cel-shading involves giving 3D characters a flat, comic book look so they're more aesthetically pleasing. Well, such lush looks didn't exactly make *Klonoa 2* fly off the shelves, but then *Sly Raccoon* has his paws rooted in much more familiar platform territory.

The game centres on Sly, a robbing raccoon born into a family of the world's greatest jewel thieves in which the Thievius Raccoonus, an ancient book and family heirloom, is traditionally passed down from generation to generation. The book holds all the best-kept secrets of the art of thievery, put together over the years from the experiences of Sly's ancestors. But on his eighth birthday, a gang of five villains break into Sly's home, overpower his Pa and steal the precious book. The gang then splits the book five ways, each taking a chunk with them and scattering the pages across the multitude of levels set within their own domains, and –

surprise, surprise – you've got to get them back.

The moment *Sly Raccoon* boots up, you instantly realise that this is a

platformer with big ambitions. There's no title screen for a start, the game simply gets underway amidst a movie-style introductory level which sees Sly break into a Parisian police headquarters to steal his file, egged on by his two partners in crime – Bently, the boffin tortoise and Murray, the completely useless hippo. The style is reminiscent of *Metal Gear Solid*, with the developer credits flashing up in the corners of the screen as you hop around the rooftops.

In fact, this game has further similarities with Konami's epic action adventure, such as the way Sly converses with Bently via the Binocucam – a kind of telescopic viewfinder-cum-radio which is very similar to Snake's Codec, right down to the way in which you can twiddle the thumb sticks to move their heads about. Sly also utilises stealth and cunning to get around some of the game's more enemy-populated danger spots.

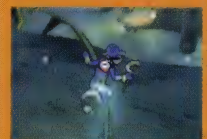
With introductions and control techniques out of the way, you're whisked off to your HQ before the game proper gets underway. And it's huge! Each of the five domains features its own introductory level which you must 'break through' in order to access the main hub and gain entry to the other levels that span out from it. Each hub features eight levels, plus the obligatory boss encounter, and they're a varied mix of sneak and search platform fare and off-beat mini-games.

A DESIGN FOR STRIFE

The actual level design is more akin to *Crash Bandicoot* than *Ratchet & Clank*, and many tend to be squeezed into linear 'corridors' with confines you can't really

PAINFUL GLITCH ALERT!

In the event of you plunging into the drink, you're launched back to the last 'safe' point of dry land that you touched. No bad thing in theory. However...



Normally, if you fall in the lake, you'll bounce from the water straight back to where you fell from. However, if there's a shallow point on the bank, Sly will get stuck there with no chance of returning to the level.



With anger gradually mounting, all hope of successfully jumping to a higher platform and continuing will be lost after the 100th attempt. Frustrating? You bet.

SAFE AND SOUND

New skills – evasive rolls, dive attacks, decoy deploying, mine tossing – are gained by cracking safes located within the levels. But getting that important code sequence is far from easy...



1



On the early levels, you must painstakingly scour every square millimetre of terrain in search of hidden clue bottles.

2



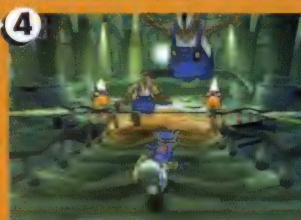
Once you have them all, find the safe and talk to Bentley who will crack the code for you. Simply enter 3-1-1 and claim your prize.

3



After a few cracked safes, you'll gain the ability to see the hard-to-spot clues with your Binocam. Phew!

4



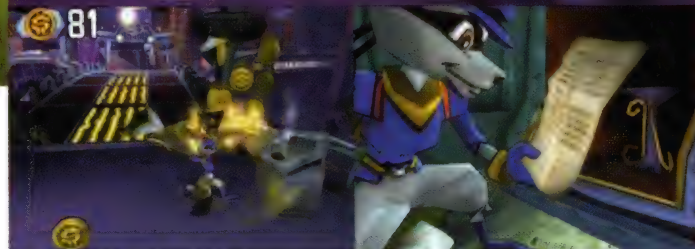
But then you change domains, lose the ability and must resort back to foraging through the undergrowth. Grrr...



■ **HOOK OR BY CROOK** Ransack new areas for hidden bonuses...



■ **DOG DODGER** You can either take on the guards and risk death or sneak past undetected...



■ **PULL THE OTHER ONE** Look out for strategically placed hooks, you can swing on them to access hidden areas...



■ **HURRY HURRY HIPPO** Your hippo mate's experience as a getaway driver will come in handy for the driving sections...



venture out of. To counteract such claustrophobia-inducing surrounds, Sucker Punch has ensured that many of the levels have added 'rocket-up-your-arse' incentives for whizzing through them quickly. There are marauding beasts chasing hot on your heels and a foxy cop (literally) who crops up and takes pot-shots at you from neighbouring rooftops – the result is that you have to scale terrain that is rapidly crumbling around you, and if your sweat-soaked thumb happens to slip off the joystick as you frantically clamber to safety, you die.

For a platform game, Sly Raccoon is infuriatingly tough – if you take a hit, you meet your maker. There's none of this energy bar nonsense or five strikes and you're out business here (although if you collect 100 tokens, you'll be awarded a 'lucky charm' which will permit you to take one hit). However, rather bizarrely, the game gets easier the further you progress. By collecting a certain amount of 'clues', which are cunningly hidden amongst the scenery, you'll be able to crack a safe within the level and gain knowledge from the page of the Thievis Raccoonus book inside. This knowledge translates into you gaining a new ability – like being able to survive falling into water, drawing scattered coins towards you or viewing hidden clue locations through your Binocam – basically, the stuff other platform games give you at the start.

Beyond Sly's captivating looks, there is precious little here that hasn't been done before, albeit with not quite as much élan. But the way in which it's all so stylishly blended into the theme dupes you into believing you're playing something more original. For example, when

you've got to get past a pack of torch-waving guards, you can either go all-out attack and dispose of them before the alarm is sounded or you can use the ◎ button at certain points to take a more stealth-like approach – be it jumping on overhanging light fittings or creeping, in an over-exaggerated comedy fashion, behind nearby obstacles. It gives you clear-cut choices on how you want to play the game, although somewhat disappointingly, you're never rewarded for one approach over another and the outcome is always the same.

This is undoubtedly an enthralling and well-crafted game, but if you gaze beyond the gorgeous graphics, you'll realise that Sly, like the cunning thief that he is, has merely stolen the best bits from other games and been stingy with the returns. □ **Ryan Butt**

SLY RACCOON

Why we'd buy it:

- We want more (MGS2) substance in our platform games
- We favour exceptional good looks over originality
- Meets all classic platform criteria

Why we'd leave it:

- It's just a souped-up Crash with some stealth bunged in
- It suffers from one or two nasty glitches
- Little originality

Graphics	Eye-meltingly vibrant and picturesque throughout	09
Sound	Bouncy tunes and plenty of comical conversations	07
Gameplay	Starved of true innovation, but works well enough	07
Life span	Easily beaten with little to come back to	06

Visually stunning and boasts hugely varied platform gameplay – even if all of its best ideas are second-hand.

07

OFFICIAL VERDICT

TROPHY TARGET There's nothing better than picking on a grounded foe who's much bigger than you.



IN A SPIN Stomach-churning rolls are good for evading incoming missiles.



BACKUP You'll be backed up by loads of fellow Forseti units.



GREAT BALLS OF FIRE Sending a bomber down in flames is very satisfying.



BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

Save the Universe in a giant mechanised flea!

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMS
DEVELOPER: LOST TOYS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEB SITE: WWW.INFOGRAMS.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
PERIPHERALS: NO

BACK STORY

Battle Engine Aquila's Director, Jeremy Longley, claims, "We seem to have lost the essence of the pure shoot 'em up." With Aquila Mr Longley is attempting to take the intensity of old-school shooters such as R-Type and Gradius and bring them to next gen systems.



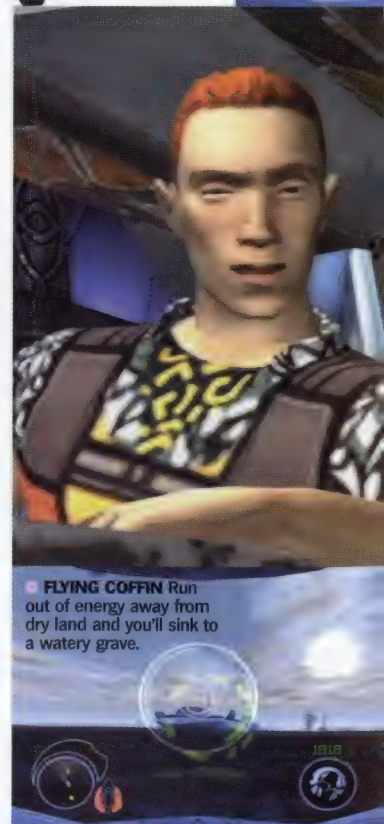
Troubled, drag racing teens of the future will get a sweet deal compared to the juvenile delinquents of today. Whereas in present times the adolescent perp can expect a hefty fine and a revoked licence, the youngsters of tomorrow will be drafted into an intergalactic war and given access to all manner of destructive ordinance. That, at least, is the premise of *Battle Engine Aquila*, the new mech shooter from Infogrames. You play the part of Hawk; you're brash, you're edgy, you play by your own rules and you also happen to be a dab hand at piloting pretty much anything fast and mechanical. This skill will come in very handy as a bloody conflict has begun between the Forseti and the Muspell and it's up to you to spearhead the assault of the Forseti forces and lead them to victory.

The action in *Battle Engine Aquila* takes place inside the war machine of the same name. It's a oddly shaped

Mech, resembling a gigantic metal flea and acting in much the same way. Rather than the sluggish funeral march of most mech games, Aquila can move swiftly and with surprising dexterity. Aquila tends to operate best when its ground attacks are equally matched with air assaults. Leaping and flying from position to position, while blasting anything that comes your way is the best strategy to ensure your survival. Hence the flea analogy. This leap-and-kill technique is made more relevant by the landscapes that dominate the game: Small islands and aircraft carriers surrounded by massive oceans tend to be the order of the day. Not only do you have to be quick on the trigger but you also have to judge the best place to land as flight energy is limited and a water landing is always fatal.

Like many games *Aquila* puts you in the role of a soldier in an intergalactic conflict. Unlike a lot of these games, however, you have no control over your fellow combatants. They will keep fighting as best they can whether you're there or not, and it's up to you to decide who needs your help the most. This adds an element of strategy to the proceedings and assists in creating an immersive future war experience. After all, the allies you save can then join you in the harder boss battles so protecting your comrades is not just morally right it's also practical. A sense of mood and atmosphere is also in evidence through the cut scenes before and after every level. These show the relationships between you and your fellow soldiers, the progress of the war and the coming-of-age aspect of Hawk who learns to be a man by shooting lots of people. These cut scenes are initially interesting but quickly wear out their welcome.

At its core *Battle Engine Aquila* is a joyfully simplistic shooter. Most of the missions are based around the destroy enemies/protect allies principle and that's not a



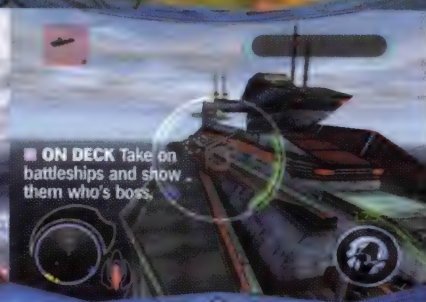
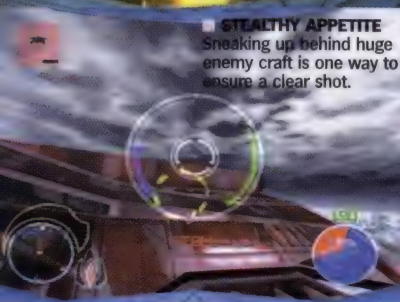
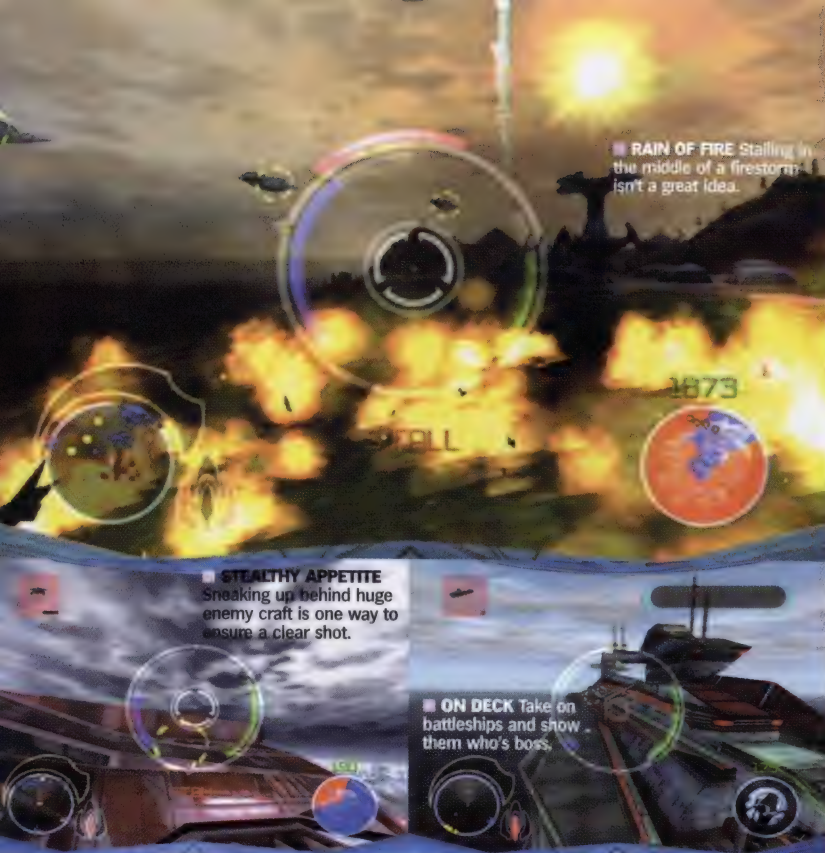
FLYING COFFIN Run out of energy away from dry land and you'll sink to a watery grave.

TOP SECRET

Good grades mean great goodies, so knuckle down and get to work, buddy.



Completing levels with high grades also unlocks a bunch of different secrets which can be perused using the Goodies option on the main menu. Some are crucial to the gameplay - new robots, for example - while others are more for fun. You can access still images, blueprints of ships, cut-scenes and so on. It's a really neat way to encourage you to keep working on your grades.



bad thing. The progress of your campaign can be viewed on a small radar map. Basically if there's anything red on it, shoot it. This may be a minor addition to the game but in the sprawling maps where its easy to lose your way, it's a welcome one.

The flaws of *Battle Engine Aquila* come not from its lack of depth but more conceptual areas. For instance, the mech itself. As previously noted it's an odd machine but it also seems out of place in the battle fields in which you fight. Why send something with limited flight capacity to an ocean battle? Also the sense of movement the Mech physics give you is dubious, often leading to confusion as to whether the Battle Engine is accelerating or staying still. This sense of dubious inertia can lead to many frustrating moments where glides are misjudged and watery graves met.

Last Toys should be congratulated for attempting to add some serious kinetic energy to the Mech genre but in doing so they may have shot themselves in the foot. *Battle Engine Aquila* feels almost too much like an airborne shooter, so you'll frequently find yourself crashing earthward forgetting that your air time is limited. So is it a Mech game that's too much like a space shooter or a space shooter with too many Mech game elements? Really it's neither and ends up sitting on some slightly uncomfortable middle ground.

That is not to say *Aquila*'s a dead loss. There's a significant amount to like about this eclectic shooter. The graphics are big and smooth if a little too colourful (there's nothing scary about enemies draped in pastel), the animation is solid if occasionally clunky and the

variety of enemies and missions is large and impressive. The difficulty level may be geared slightly towards the easy side but like similar shooters such as *Jedi Starfighter* a swag of secondary objectives will keep the more thorough players coming back in their eternal quest for mission perfection.

Most impressive, however, is *Aquila*'s multiplayer options. Rather than just tack on a couple of dodgy Deathmatch levels, Lost Toys have given the punter a lot of value for their buck with multiple game types. It is this care and attention to detail that make *Battle Engine Aquila* the enjoyable, if slightly misguided, experience it is. The control issues aside, it's a very entertaining shooter and should have the mech pilot within all armchair future soldiers braying for more. **Anthony O'Connor**

BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA

Why we'd buy it	Why we'd leave it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's a fast paced take on the Mech genre - Lots of missions with lots of shooting - Impressive multiplayer options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's a little simplistic and repetitive - Mech looks and acts like a flea - Physics can cause occasional frustration
Graphics	Large and impressive, but an overuse of pastels. 07
Sound	Effective explosions and weapons fire. 07
Gameplay	Simple and fun with occasionally dodgy physics. 06
Life span	Many missions, secrets, impressive multiplayer. 08

An enjoyable mech-shooter that is kept from being an instant classic by some niggling conceptual problems.

07

OFFICIAL VERDICT

SIXTY MINUTES

One hour to comply. Start counting...

- 00.20** As *Battle Engine Aquila* loads, wonder what Optimus Prime is up to nowadays, and whether this game's giant 'bots will measure up.
- 02.00** Watch intro sequence and marvel at the way the dodgy lip-syncing makes it look like a badly-dubbed soap opera on SBS.
- 05.00** Start training mission, which shows the basic controls. Piece of cake.
- 08.00** Blush with shame as we manage to fail training mission, after accidentally blowing up own buildings. Vow not to be so smug next time.
- 12.00** Into first mission proper. Decide to hang back and take things cautiously for a bit.
- 12.20** Charge headlong into the waves of enemy forces, firing blindly at anything that moves. Die.
- 20.00** First comedy-drowning mishap, as we forget to keep in range of something to land on. Slowly descend into the sea, swearing furiously.
- 32.00** Second comedy-drowning mishap. 'Bot sinks literally seconds before the last enemy is killed to complete the mission. Vow to stay on dry land from now on.
- 33.00** Abandon 'dry land' theory sharpish, as bombs rain down.
- 46.00** Land on a battleship and spend ages running around on foot destroying guns, only to realise that a wave of bombers is pulverising our own convoy of ships.
- 57.00** Finally complete Convoy mission, using tried-and-tested tactic of shooting missiles at random and hoping some of them hit something.

REVIEW

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION



GOT DA MOVES You need a full power bar if you want to pull off something special.



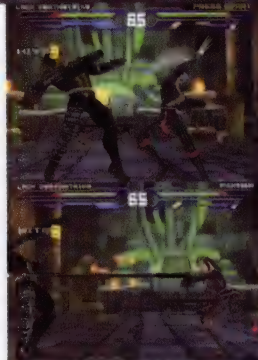
THINK PINK Phoenix has several confusion attacks, all in fetching pink hues.



SHE'S ELASTIC Lady D attacks at full stretch.

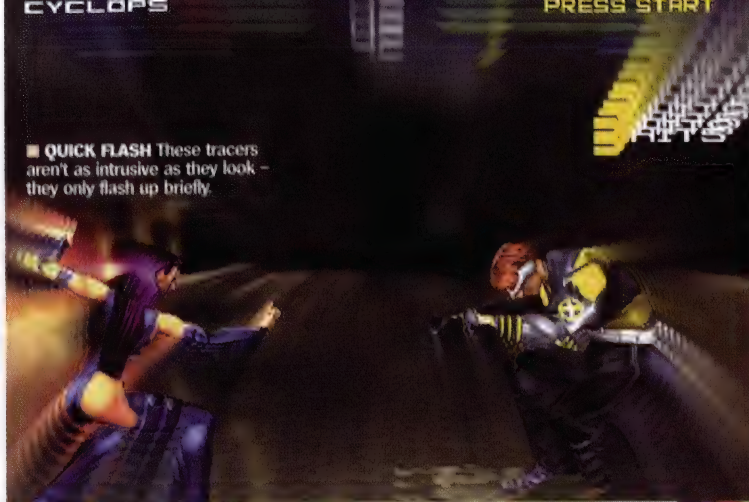
BACK STORY

With the impending release of the next cinematic instalment, there's been a predictable Xplosion of X-Men-related games. *Next Dimension* and the forthcoming *Wolverine's Revenge* aren't film tie-ins, but they'll surely let you get more hands-on with your favourite mutants.



BEAST

We could've sworn Beast was the gold jump-suit type. And where'd he pick up that talent for Capoeira? The Tekken School of Martial Dance?



QUICK FLASH These tracers aren't as intrusive as they look – they only flash up briefly.

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

X-treme, X-hilarating X-itement? Not really.



Prepare to meet Bastion – he's a particularly evil human. With an army of big robot Sentinels behind him, he's out to destroy all mutants by capturing the X-Man Forge. It's up to you and your mutant fight club to control an alliance of mutants. So it's an X-Men-themed beat-'em-up, then.

Anyone who's played a beat-'em-up in the last ten years will be familiar with the set-up and basic modes of play: Story, Arcade, Versus, Practice and Survival. *X-Men: Next Dimension*, on the other hand, is a beat-'em-up that, in an insidious attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of Johnny Gamer, includes what (on the surface) appears to be an intriguing set of other features.

There are, of course, the X-Men super powers. Each mutie's abilities are represented by a Super Meter bar at the top of the screen that fills up every time you make an attack. This bar is divided into three segments which, when full, allow you to demonstrate certain moves. By pressing **X** you can also change which segment you are charging at any time – handy if there's a power you want to use but don't want to waste time acquiring it. It's an innovative feature that could have worked really well but, in practice, the fast pace of battle renders the decision-making process pointless.

The game boasts large, interactive environments that make full use of moves designed to lob enemies into pillars, against steps and over ledges. If your chosen mutant from the familiar 24 available has telekinetic powers (or, in Toad's case, a ruddy great tongue) you can also hurl smaller objects as missiles. Again, this seems like a great idea and, with practice, it can work very nicely. But for the majority of fights it gives a false impression of depth. Bouts quickly become little more than a repetitive exercise of trusted moves that guarantee results. You'll seldom want to risk the tricky manoeuvres because fights are just so frantic.



BRIGHT EYES Scott's basic beam is easy to pull off.

This is X-Men, so some characters have the ability to take to the skies. You achieve flight by jumping then tapping **X**, whereupon you have a limited period to hover in the air. You would expect this to add an interesting new dynamic to the classic beat-'em-up arena, right? Unfortunately not – it changes virtually nothing at all. In one memorable moment our character, Mystique, was positioned well beneath the stream of magnetic energy that was being fired by a flying Magneto when, completely out of the blue, the game decided we'd been hit and proceeded to levitate us in line with the shot. Rather frustrating, to say the least.

What we're left with is a distinctly average beat-'em-up with a good licence, some very respectable visuals and tidy production values. It pushes the concept of the fighting game a little further, but just not far enough. Quite simply, *X-Men: Next Dimension* seems to have no shame in focusing on its licence instead of the gameplay, making it a collectors item for rabid fans of the Marvel Comics, rather than something for fighting game fans. **X** James Carey

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

Why we'd buy it:

- The combat feels chunky and powerful
- Spectacular super powers
- Great characters

Why we'd leave it:

- Features gimmicks that don't really work
- Uninspired story line
- Limited fighting styles

Graphics	Detailed characters and environments, rubbish FMV	07
Sound	Repetitive babble, but Patrick Stewart narrates!	06
Gameplay	Uninspiring but occasionally challenging	06
Life span	An array of unlockables to keep you distracted	06

Mutton-dressed-as-lamb gameplay. Great characters and environments, but this mutant needs to evolve again.

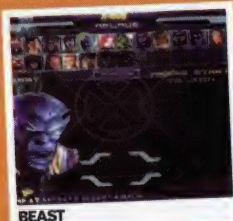
06

OFFICIAL VERDICT

ROLL CALL

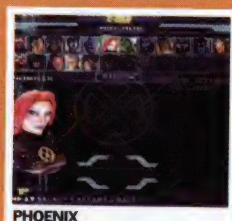
MUTIE AND THE BEAST

Is it us, or do the X-Men change appearance more often than the incontinent change their pants?



BEAST

We could've sworn Beast was the gold jump-suit type. And where'd he pick up that talent for Capoeira? The Tekken School of Martial Dance?



PHOENIX

Phoenix is actually Jean Grey. She's had a bit of a personality makeover and a power rethink. She's now all about the blaze and has a feisty attitude, too.



CYCLOPS

Luckily, some things never change. The monocular Scott Summers is still the smarmy, annoying, blueblood do-gooder he's always been. Damn.

HEALTHY GLOW Wolverine can regenerate health.





INSIDER JOB Once the boss man, you're now on the run.

HALL OR NOTHING The game has most of the film's interiors, but be careful of the extras.

NEED A LIFT? Not this one, foes aplenty.

FIVE'S A CROWD Fighting isn't usually a one-on-one affair in this all-action beat-'em-up.

ALL BAR NONE You're cornered, but you're packing heat.

WALL-KING IN THE AIR Environments are interactive and detailed.

BATON BATTER Enemies come fully equipped with weapons from guns to plain old daysticks.

MINORITY REPORT

Great movie tie-in games remain in the minority.

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: MARGAMEACTIVISION.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES

BACK STORY

Minority Report's Developer, Treyarch, previously delivered another big-name movie licence title in Spider-Man. Both games are similar, with the emphasis on taking the movie's (sort of) hero on a brawl though the film's rough streets in an attempt to (sort of) reach the movie's conclusion.



Surely the time has come for movie games to strut their expensively licensed stuff. The potential synergy between what you see on the big screen and what you play at home has never been stronger, so there's no excuse for these games not to replicate the feel of the movies they ape.

Minority Report goes some way towards achieving this goal, although perhaps not in the way the developer would want. The game looks good, and each level has a distinct aesthetic and feel, that isn't limited to scenes from the movie. You play Detective John Anderton, a tall, blonde character who only serves to emphasise Tom Cruise's absence. If you've seen the movie, then the plot will hold no real surprises for you. If you haven't, your task is to catch criminals before they commit crimes, but soon Anderton is also on the run from the Precrime department for an alleged future murder.

We liked the Spielberg-directed movie of the same name, for the first two hours anyway. And we found the same with the PS2 version: the first 120 minutes take you on an adrenaline-driven pixellated rush, but then it dawns on you that perhaps there was slightly more to the movie than just running around a futuristic cityscape beating up complete strangers who inexplicably get between you and your target. The problem is that, while the glossy special effects and disturbing dystopia of the film did enough to carry what was a thinly-stretched plot, the game doesn't really have that power at its disposal. Yes, it looks good, and there are some nice touches, including the hoardings advertising real-life products dotted about the landscape, but you soon realise that it's just another game with short missions that involve a lot of brawling and running – not unlike Spider-Man in that respect.

However, the game's one saving grace is the jetpack which is available for a few missions. It's a great utility, but one that is sadly underused and will leave you wanting to do more flying and less footwork. You also get to do lots of fighting, and whether it's against gangs of unruly teens in a mall or your ex-colleagues from Precrime, it's very well done. There are loads of special moves on offer to help defeat the mass of adversaries (helpfully explained in a sub-menu) plus a small armoury of futuristic weapons. These are normally picked up as you move through levels, but if you find enough cash you can also buy them on the black market, along with body armour, health boosts and extra fighting moves.

Minority Report isn't a bad game, and if virtual brawls in shopping malls are your thing, you'll love it. It just feels as if the developer has missed the point of the film and what could have been a trip into a mixed-up future ends up as a journey into mediocrity. **Shaun Marin**

MINORITY REPORT

Why we'd buy it:

- Levels are all distinct and well thought out
- That jetpack is loads of fun

Why we'd leave it:

- There are better fighting adventure games out there
- Doesn't do the movie justice
- The story line is weak

Graphics

Locations are great, but bad guys are repetitive

06

Sound

Quite anaemic, and Anderton's one-liners are weak

04

Gameplay

Satisfying combat, but too samey

06

Life span

Secrets add to longevity, but still too short

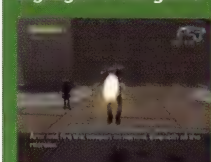
05

A decent fighting game for those who love to brawl, but considering the source material, it's a missed opportunity.

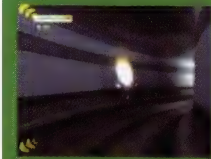
05

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Standout Moment
JET SET WILLY
The jetpack adventures are short and sweet, but they're still the highlight of the game.



Training involves a quick bit of flying and shooting static targets, but it's dead easy so don't spend too long here.



You'll take a few hits going through the subway system, but you're too fast for most enemies to hurt you.



Outdoors things look up, although you'll need to get closer if you want to do any damage to the police.



Flying is loads of fun, but eventually you'll need to get back on Shanks's pony and get on with the game.

REVIEW

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003



■ **LOOK AT THAT!** You get a fly-by of each hole before you play it so you know where the hazards are lurking.

■ **SINK IT** A rather handy caddy tip for putts tells you how the green lies.



■ **GREAT LAKE** This is the famous 17th hole at Sawgrass. It's a bitch.



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

With this game, it won't be uncommon to hear cries of "You the man!" in the lounge room.



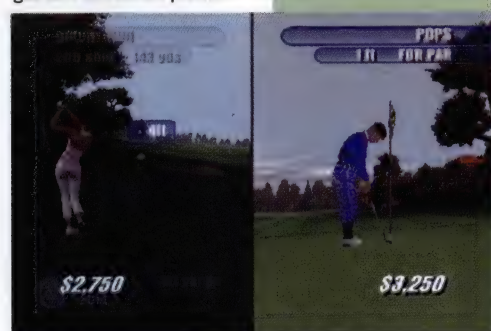
DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA SPORTS**
PRICE: **\$99.95**
PLAYERS: **1-2 PLAYERS**
OUT: **NOW**
WEBSITE:
TIGERWOODS2003.EA.COM
60HZ MODE: **NO**
WIDESCREEN: **NO**
SURROUND SOUND: **NO**


■ **HOLE OUT** If your putt is going to be close, you get this worm's-eye view of it.

■ BACK STORY

— *This is the third, and by far the best, instalment in the Tiger Woods series. Just like the man himself, who was back to his devastating best after a lacklustre performance last year, this year's version absolutely dominates the opposition.*

■ **NOT CRICKET** Split-screen two-player speed golf isn't one for the purists.



 Few sports inspire the same level of fanaticism as golf, and for all the fanatics out there, *Tiger Woods 2003* offers the ultimate indulgence. After enjoying a round on a nice summer's morning, players can now sit back and relax at the 19th hole and refine their skills with *TWPGA 2003*. It beats sweating it out at the driving range any day.

One of the best things about *TWPGA 2003* is its new and extremely practical swing system. Pushing up or down on either analogue stick controls the upswing and downswing of a club and, correspondingly, power and distance. It's a remarkably natural system because whilst it allows players to execute draw and fade shots, just as in real life minor errors produce the inevitable and costly hook or slice.

Players can also choose from a number of different shot types (approach, full, punch, or flop) to tackle any situation, whether the ball is lying in heavy rough or sitting sweetly on the fairway. The AI offers some tips regarding how to attack a hole, and what type of shot to play, but certainly isn't as heavy handed as in other golf games. Whilst the initial learning curve is quite steep, it is a rewarding one. Players will discover the game's many nuances as they become more proficient.

With this excellent system in hand, players will get to take on a mix of 15 fantasy and real life PGA courses, including the legendary St Andrews. Apart from the man himself, players can also play as a number of well known pros including our own Stuart Appleby, and young hotshot, Ty Tryon.

TWPGA 2003 features some brilliant animation. Watching the players pump their fists after holing a thirty foot putt, or tossing a club in frustration after just missing the cup will make you think you're watching a TV

broadcast. In the sound department, things are a little contradictory. Whilst the commentary is suitably restrained, rock tunes give the game an extreme sports feel.

Where other golf games might have settled for less, *TWPGA 2003* is only just getting going. Apart from the usual tournament and matchplay modes, there is a host of excellently designed and immensely fun scenarios, challenges and mini-games to play. Not only can players sharpen their skills, but there's also cash to be won, which can in turn be spent on improving attributes or buying new equipment. Best of all, *TWPGA 2003* features a comprehensive career record system that tracks every putt, drive, and statistic.

TPWGA 2003 is the perfect mix of arcade and realistic golf. The arcade elements make it feel like the ultimate version of putt-putt, while the sim elements will bring players close to John Daly-esque tantrums with every wayward shot. An essential game for any golf nut. ☐ **Derek Lee**

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

Why we'd buy it:

- Intuitive and realistic swing system
- Huge range of play modes
- Extremely lifelike player models and animation

Why we'd leave it:

- Relatively steep learning curve
- Slow load times between each hole
- You're saving for a Big Bertha

Graphics	Perfectly animated models and textured courses	95
Sound	Nicely informative commentary but ill-fitting music	70
Gameplay	Huge mix of excellent game modes	95
Life span	Heaps to unlock and extensive career mode	90

The best golf game, on any platform, ever, and lasts longer than a \$200 round at St Andrews.

09

OFFICIAL VERDICT

TIGER'S NEW STRIPES

As we've come to expect from EA Sports, this is more of an update than a whole new game. But some things are new, and here they are...



NEW CHARACTERS As well as the real golfers, *Tiger 2003* offers fictional playable characters. Choose from nine brand-new golfers, including Felicia here.



MAKE YOUR OWN COURSE Take part in Skills Zone and you get mini-games to play. Win them and you earn the right to create your own course, hole by hole.



BETTER LOOKS This is any publisher's favourite claim, but it's true. It may only be a couple of months since *Tiger 2002*, but 2003 is definitely the looker of the two.



DRAGONBALL Z: BUDOKAI

Get ready to die! Hi-yaaa!



It's probably best to first explain what *Dragonball Z* is all about... which is not that straightforward. The Japanese cartoon and comic series centres around the adventures of Goku – a member of an intergalactic warrior race called the Salyans – who was sent to Earth as a baby with orders to destroy the planet. Luckily for us, his brain was scrambled on landing and instead of taking us apart, he's become the planet's fiercest defender, loyally fighting the Salyans, Team Ginyu and any other intergalactic threat.

With its epic plot, gratuitous violence and a deafening volume of hair, *Dragonball Z* makes compelling viewing. It also provides rich source material for what is a hugely entertaining beat-'em-up. While *Budokai* cannot compete with *Tekken* or *Virtua Fighter* in terms of sophistication, it compensates with character, intensity and a will of iron.

Keeping the combos simple, *Budokai* plays a little like *Dead Or Alive*, as success is grounded in timing attacks rather than memorising chains of moves. The real beauty of the game, is found in the fighting styles, which range

from brutal to downright silly. Cheer as angry toddler Gohan nabs Raditz's smug face through a mountain! Cry as Krillin gets crushed by a giant ape! This mayhem is then followed by equally insane cut-scenes.

Developer Dimps has made a real effort to appeal to *DBZ* devotees – they'll truly appreciate *Dragonball Z: Budokai* – which, despite its charm, may alienate some gamers. However, *Budokai* is sure to convert many PS2 owners to the way of the Dragonball. □ David Harrison

DRAGONBALL Z: BUDOKAI

Why we'd buy it:

- Great introduction to *Dragonball Z* and hugely entertaining

Why we'd leave it:

- Gameplay is a lightweight source of truly strange material

Graphics 06

Sound 06

Gameplay 06

Life span 06

Not for everyone's taste, but a plucky scrapper that will tickle *DBZ* fans and astound everybody else.

06

OFFICIAL VERDICT



PUBLISHER: BANDAI/INFORMER
DEVELOPER: DIMPS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT NOW
WEB SITE: WWW.DRAGONBALLZ.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO

HELLO SAILOR The giant Raccome shows his cheeky side. What a joker!



NOT SO BRIGHT
What's with the lemon-line headlights?



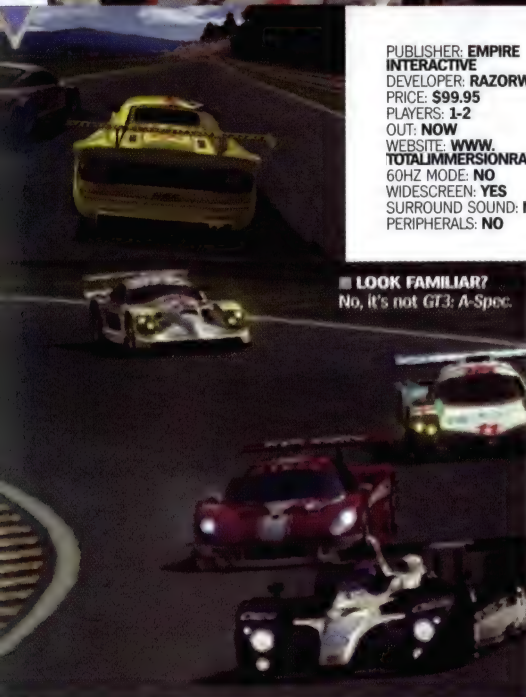
TOTALLY IMMERSERD
Yep, he's in a car.

RAVISHING REPLAYS Like GT3, the replays look brilliant.



PUBLISHER: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: RAZORWORKS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.TOTALIMMERSIONRACING.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: NO
PERIPHERALS: NO

LOOK FAMILIAR?
No, it's not GT3: A-Spec.



TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Totally Average Racing was a less catchy title...



The Renaissance must have been a tough time for average artists. Their more-than-adequate works would have been totally eclipsed by the artistic masters in their prime. This is how it must feel to be *Total Immersion Racing*.

The game itself is yet another GT-style simulation. Like almost every other title in this genre you control a fictitious driver who has to pick a racing team and work their way up through the ranks, facing tough competition at every turn. You can also fine tune almost every aspect of your car, tweaking the various components to give you that little extra edge over the next man. If only the designers of the game had done the same thing. There is a veritable laundry list of niggling flaws that crop up in this game. The controls lack a fine touch and each corner feels like it's going to dislocate your thumbs, the car physics are sluggish and all the vehicles seem somehow glued to the road, the sound is annoyingly simplistic and the commentary feels like it was written for not very bright seven year

olds, there's no damage modelling and finally the "Opponent AI" system is basically non-existent. After all, whether your opponent is "Angry" at you or not, they're still going to try and beat you. That's why it's a race!

Total Immersion Racing isn't a bad game. In fact had it been released just eighteen months ago it would have been considered quite good. However, as things stand now it's an average game in a field of excellent contenders. □ Anthony O'Connor

TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Why we'd buy it:

- Solid enough GT racing game.
- It looks pretty and is quite long

Why we'd leave it:

- Been done before and better
- Sluggish controls.

Graphics 07

Sound 05

Gameplay 06

Life span 05

Total Immersion Racing is neither immersive nor fun. It's average with a capital "A".

05

OFFICIAL VERDICT



DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-8 PLAYERS
PRICE: \$99.95
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: NBALIVE2003.EA.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
PERIPHERALS: NO



NBA LIVE 2003

With this hoops title, its hard not to be like Mike.



The NBA Live series is nothing if not predictable. Thankfully, rather than featuring the usual roster updates and copying whatever innovative features the Madden football series showcased the previous year, the 2003 version attempts to add its own groundbreaking feature to the genre.

It comes in the form of the Freestyle control system which allows players to use the right analogue stick (the left still controls general movement) to execute a variety of killer crossovers, stutter-steps, spin and post moves. It's a nice addition that allows players more freedom of control and creativity but has its shortcomings.

The reason is that the Freestyle system, along with on-the-fly calls for isolation and two-man plays, overemphasises one-dimensional flashy playground moves at the expense of variety in gameplay. Why bother posting up an opponent or trying to get a man open for the three when its so easy to drive the paint? Where NBA 2K3 features ultra realistic physics and gameplay, Live 2003 often feels like NBA Street with five players.

While some players will prefer the ability to seemingly

execute reverse double-pump jams at will, others might find that it quickly becomes boring, particularly in single player season or franchise mode. Thankfully, at least the rebounding mechanics have been improved so controlling defensive boards is more balanced.

NBA Live 2003 is tailor made for hoops fans who, like the Dallas Mavs, prefer to run-and-gun. The arcade-type action makes it great for multiplayer but not so good if you want to be challenged by a tough 82 game season. Fans after a more realistic experience should stick to 2K3. ☐ Derek Lee

NBA LIVE 2003

Why we'd buy it:

- Great arcade-like action
- To posterize defenders

Why we'd leave it:

- Lack of extra modes
- Fiddly menu system

Graphics 08

Sound 06

Gameplay 07

Life span 07

Whilst NBA Live 2003 overemphasises highlight reel moves, they're still only worth two points.

07

OFFICIAL VERDICT



TOTAL TACTICS No football here, just charts and stats.



ALL ACTION No stats or charts here, just football.



FULL HOUSE Bigger stadia allow you to juice more out of your fans.

LMA 2003

The game that's not afraid to breach its technical area.

PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO

WHOLE KIT AND KABOODLE Sponsorship can affect your kit and ads.



It's a funny old game football. Two halves apparently. Much more important than life or death, they say. Well LMA is back with its latest instalment to give you the chance to see just what your team has in its locker.

LMA 2003 is basically just an update with the latest team lists and strips. Its accuracy has been aided by the introduction of the transfer deadline, which ensures that line-ups won't change until the winter transfer window.

The configuration of the menu screens is the same as before and new player managers will find that they take some getting used to. But once you've got the hang of it, using the interface becomes second nature and what could be a nightmare task of keeping track of the different screens showing transfer information, league and cup diaries, training schedules and so on, becomes surprisingly simple.

The sheer amount of information at your fingertips is impressive. There are comprehensive stats for each of 17,000-plus professional players from the 720 European

football clubs. Another feature carried over from last year's outing is the ability to change the playing style of the team while watching the game unfold, accompanied by helpful insights from Messrs Lineker and Hansen.

Granted, this sort of game is only going to appeal to those who enjoy getting involved in the statistical side of soccer, and very little has changed from last time round, but the LMA series still covers every blade of grass on the pitch. The lads done good. ☐ Rowan McIntyre

LMA 2003

Why we'd buy it:

- To keep up to date with all the team rosters

Why we'd leave it:

- There's very little that's new

Graphics 06

Sound 07

Gameplay 07

Life span 05

If you think you can do a better job than Fergie and Wenger, here's your chance to prove it.

07

OFFICIAL VERDICT



THE 2003 ANNUAL

Mixed by

Mark Dynamix

UltraSun

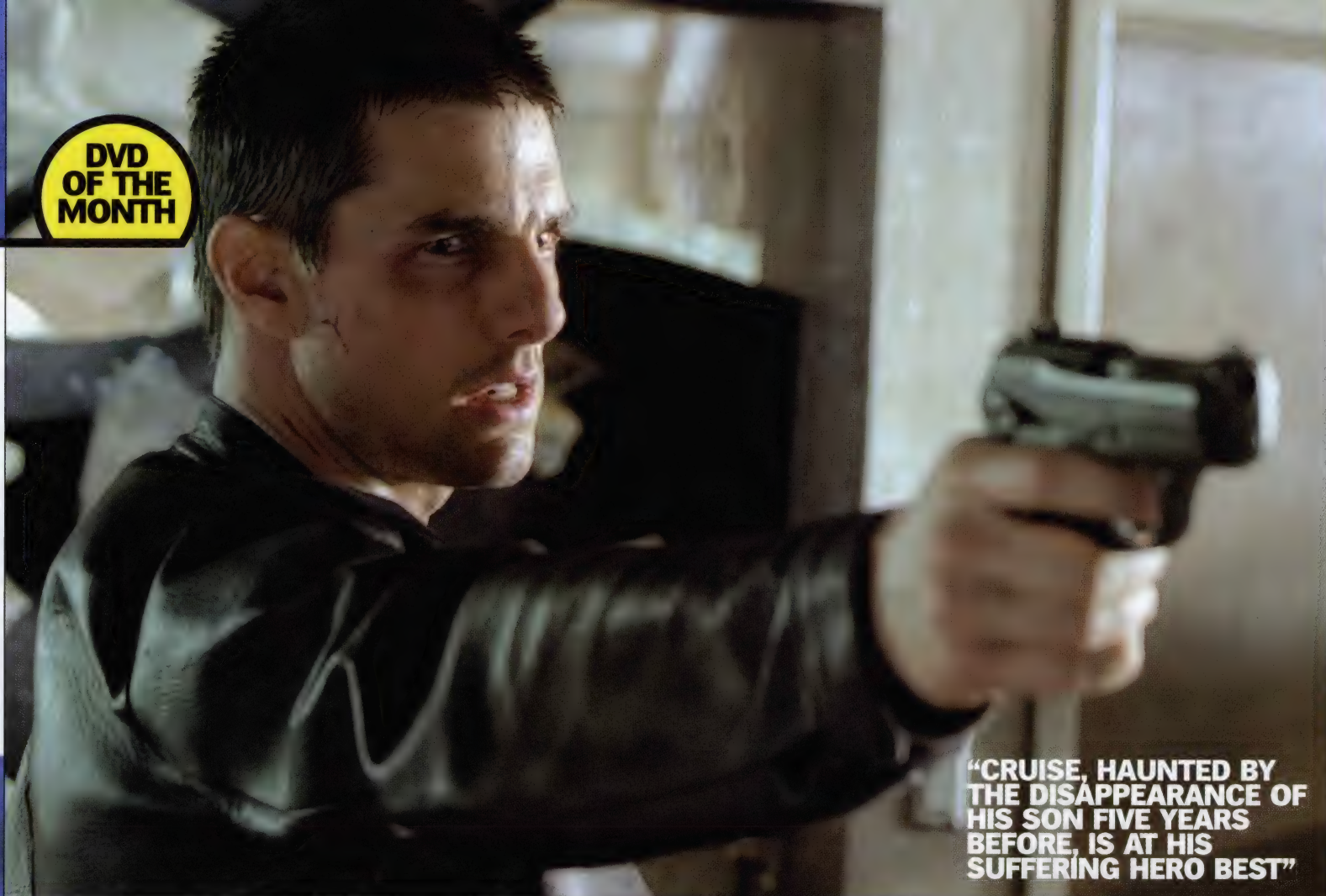
2 x CD

Out Now

www.ministryofsound.com.au

Featuring Tracks:	IIO	Jakatta featuring Seal	Novaspace
Angie Stone	Cassius	Underworld	Raven Maize
Layo & Bushwacka!	The Beginerz	Felix Da Housecat	X-Press 2 featuring David Byrne
Ferry Corsten	4 Strings	Kylie Minogue	The Streets

**DVD
OF THE
MONTH**



"CRUISE, HAUNTED BY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF HIS SON FIVE YEARS BEFORE, IS AT HIS SUFFERING HERO BEST"

Minority Report

Cruise and Spielberg combine for superior sci-fi action.

FILM: Having divided audiences with the visionary but somewhat inaccessible *AI*, Steven Spielberg's return to the future is a far more orthodox and instantly enjoyable offering. Tom Cruise is Detective John Anderton, chief investigator with the Precrime Division; a secretive outfit that uses three Precognitives to predict murders before they occur. When John starts delving too deeply into an unsolved case he finds himself framed for murder and on the run, determined to clear his name and find the real bad apple in the Precrime cart.

It's high concept stuff then, given an engrossing sheen by rich environmental and technological detail. The action toms and froes between hyper-modern shopping centres complete with animated product placement, to underworld cyberpunk dystopias where black market eye surgeons ply their craft in garbage-filled apartments. Cruise, haunted by the disappearance of his son five years before, is at his suffering hero best, receiving quality support from Samantha Morton as the main Precog and Max Von Sydow as Ming the Merciless. Oh alright, as *The Cruiser's* gruff old mentor, Director Lamar Burgess.

Scratch beneath the surface and you'll find themes exploring the subjective nature of guilt, and the danger to human rights represented by invasive policing methods. But on the other hand, you could just enjoy a rollicking thriller with cool gadgets, unforeseen twists and some cracking action set-pieces. **8/10**

EXTRAS: The kind of two-disc bonanza we've come to expect from big new releases. Spielberg doesn't 'do' commentaries but everything else is here from interviews with the man himself and star Tom Cruise, to featurettes delving into every aspect of the production. **8/10**

VERDICT: A captivating mix of future noir and blockbuster action, this is among the year's best movies. **LH**



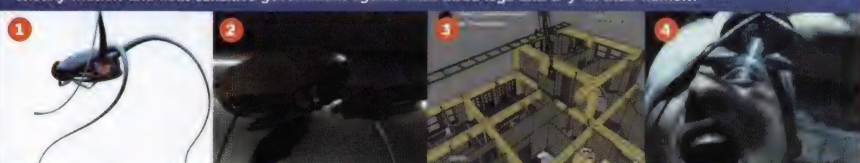
Director
Steven Spielberg
Starring Tom Cruise, Samantha Morton, Colin Farrell, Max Von Sydow, Kathryn Morris
Distributor Fox
Out Now
Price \$39.95
Extras From Story To Screen documentary. The World of Minority Report, Precrime And Precogs, The Spyder Sequence, Precog Visions, Vehicles (of the Future), The Stunts of Minority Report plus ILM and Minority Report featurettes. Steven Spielberg and Tom Cruise Interviews. Production Concepts. Storyboard Sequences. Trailers.



WHERE'S MINE? Tom glances to Spielberg, miffed that he didn't get a silly helmet too.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Arachnophobes beware! In the future, spiders aren't just six-legged household pests, they're sneaky motion and heat sensitive government agents with three legs and a 'y' in their name...



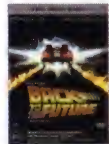
One of *Minority Report's* highlights is the scene where artificially intelligent mechanical 'spiders' are sent into a tenement block to search for in-hiding Tom Cruise. Featurette *The Spyder Sequence* deconstructs the scene, covering the early spider designs **(1)**, ILM's creepy CGI

creations **(2)** the use of a ground-breaking new computer program to plan the scene's elaborate camera movements **(3)**, and how John Williams composed a frenetic, buzzing score to add an even greater sense of tension to the finished sequence **(4)**.

Recommended viewing for your PlayStation 2 cinema system.

Back to the Future Trilogy

Director Robert Zemeckis/Starring Michael J Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson, Crispin Glover, Mary Steenburgen/Distributor Universal/Out 2 December/Price \$59.95



FILM: The finest comedy time travel trilogy you'll ever see, *Back to the Future* gave birth to Michael J Fox and rediscovered the madcap effervescence of Christopher Lloyd after a post-*Taxi* career lull. The twisting narrative revolves around teenage skateboarder Marty McFly, thrown back to the fifties in Dr Emmett Brown's DeLorean where he accidentally upsets the budding relationship between his parents. Having fixed that, McFly gets back to the present but, in number two, must go into the future to sort his kids out before hitching saddle for the old Wild West in the third and final part. Successfully mixing knockabout

comedy with the complexities of the space/time continuum, the series is an unmissable treat on DVD. While the middle segment (the weakest by far) would probably baffle Stephen Hawking, there's enough fun in the others to cover the odd glaring causality inconsistency. **8/10**
EXTRAS: Whoa there! A pile of goodies spread across three discs includes featurettes, out-takes, deleted scenes and storyboard to film comparisons for all three movies. An enjoyable commentary by Director/Co-writer Robert Zemeckis and Producer/Co-writer Bob Gale, plus masses more. **8/10**
VERDICT: Hugely entertaining trilogy presented in a quality box set. ☐ LH



■ **THE CAR'S THE STAR**
 Unfortunately *Back to the Future* didn't help DeLorean get 'back into profit.'



Bob Gale
 Writer/Producer

EXTRA! EXTRA!

From its origins to its legacy, take a trip down Back To The Future memory lane...

Split into three chapters covering all three films/discs, *Making the Trilogy* is an exhaustive documentary exclusive to this DVD release. It features rare behind-the-scenes footage plus new interviews with the main players, in which co-creator Bob Gale reveals that the whole enterprise resulted from the simple idea: "What if you could go to high school with your parents?"



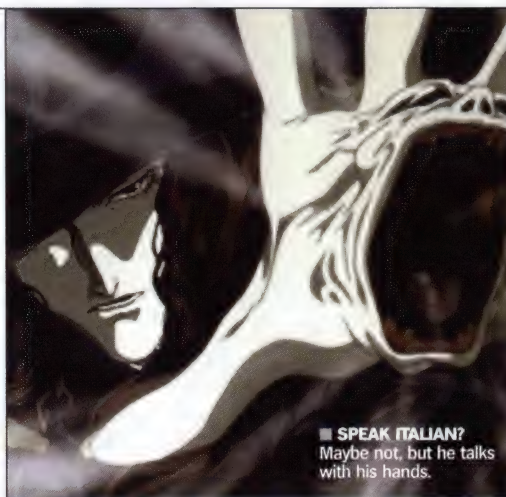
■ **PSYCHO CHICK**
 "Get these electrodes off me now!"

Vanilla Sky

Director Cameron Crowe/Starring Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz, Kurt Russell, Jason Lee/Distributor Paramount/Out Now/Price \$30.95



FILM: Cameron Crowe's cover version of the great Spanish thriller *Open Your Eyes* is admirably experimental for a mainstream star vehicle. Tom Cruise is the playboy who has it all but when he spurns bunny-boiler Cameron Diaz for Penelope Cruz, he winds up accused of murder, disfigured and lamenting his ruined life from behind a prosthetic mask... Or does he? Dream-like in its mix of memory and reality, it'll keep you guessing right to the final twist. **7/10**
EXTRAS: A behind-the-scenes documentary and collage of images from the press tour, plus a Cameron Crowe commentary that is a veritable masterclass on the filmmaking process. **7/10**
VERDICT: A challenging, genre-bending head trip which almost matches Alejandro 'The Others' Amenábar's original. ☐ LH



■ **SPEAK ITALIAN?**
 Maybe not, but he talks with his hands.

Vampire Hunter D

Director Yoshiaki Kawajiri/Starring (voice) Hideyuki Tanaka, Ichiro Nagai, Koichi Yamadera, Megumi Hayashibara/Out Now/Price \$32.95



FILM: From director Yoshiaki Kawajiri comes *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, an animated feature in the same action-packed vein as his previous classics *Wicked City* and *Ninja Scroll*. A half-vampiric bounty hunter is charged with the task of rescuing a damsel in distress from a notorious vampire, but another team of mercenaries and genuine love between kidnapper and kidnappee complicate things nicely. Superb hand-drawn animation with some boss fight scenes do for this feature what its plot and dialogue can't. Perfect for anime-heads, ify for fans of good film. **7/10**
EXTRAS: A 23 minute 'Making of' feature, storyboard-to-film comparisons and interviews with crew members **6/10**
VERDICT: While thin on plot and clever dialogue, there's enough slick animation and stylised gothic action to satiate anime fans ☐ DT

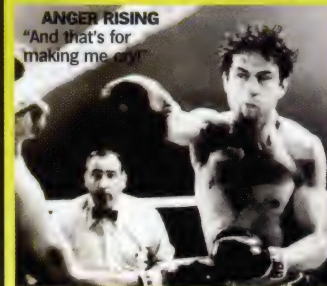


DVDS YOU MUST OWN MOULIN ROUGE

Yes, it's a musical. Yes, it's a love story. But Baz Luhrmann's dizzyingly sensuous showstopper is no throwaway chick flick. With a second disc crammed with interviews, featurettes and a scene editing suite there's no excuse not to own this film. Just say it's for your Mum.

PS2 EGGSTRA

Hidden DVD treasures for your pleasure.



RAGING BULL

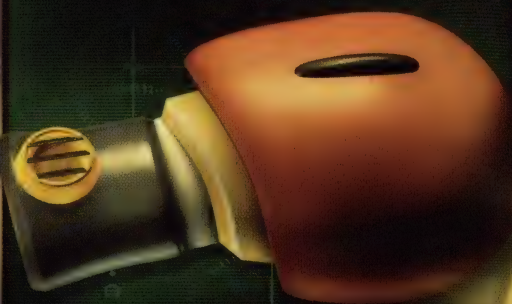
WHAT TREAT'S IN STORE? A bit of boxing history... A 60-second newsreel clip showing Jake LaMotta dramatically knocking out Laurent Dauthuille in the final round of his 1950 title defence.

WHERE IS IT? Insert the second disc and on the Main Menu you can highlight the two 'G's in the word 'Raging' using the up button. Highlight the first 'G' (press Enter) to access a still photo gallery. Highlight both to unlock the newsreel footage.

SEND US YOUR EASTER EGGS

Spotted a DVD bonus, have you? Then drop us a line at OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au and let us know where and how you found it.

WALLOPER



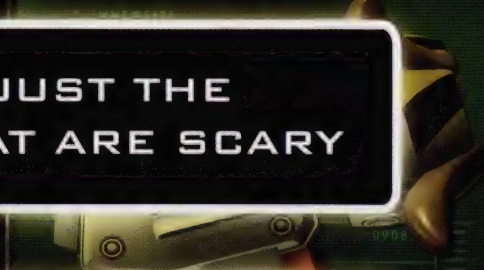
TAUNTER



VISIBOMB



SWINGSHOT



IT'S NOT JUST THE
WEAPONS THAT ARE SCARY

IT'S WHO THEY BELONG TO



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PlayStation 2
THE CRAZY PLACE THE EXCITING PLACE THE THIRD PLACE





postal

This month: A call for an end to negative letters, i-Link gaming and the Tekken 4 comp.

THE LETTERS ARE FLOODING IN NOW SO KEEP THEM COMING! IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK OR SAY, WRITE TO US AT OPS2@DERWENTHOWARD.COM.AU OR SEND SNAIL MAIL TO OPS2, DERWENT HOWARD PTY. LTD, PO BOX 1037, BONDI JUNCTION, NSW 1355. THE WINNER OF THE STAR LETTER EACH ISSUE GETS A GAME - A GOOD GAME - OF OUR CHOOSING. JUST REMEMBER: WE WANT INTELLIGENT, INFORMED LETTERS THAT DON'T ALL TALK ABOUT THE SAME THING. NO FLAMING, NO 'MY CONSOLE'S BETTER THAN YOURS' STUFF, NO 'WHEN IS GAME XXX OUT?' ETC. AND FOR MERCY'S SAKE, USE THE SPELLCHECKER IF YOU SEND YOUR LETTER BY EMAIL - THEN WE MIGHT, TOO. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO TRUNCATE, HACK AND SLASH YOUR LETTER SEEMINGLY AT RANDOM.



STAR LETTER

WHY WHINGE?

I have been reading OPS2 since its beginning and I have come to realise that people are writing in to complain or either express their anger to game makers. There's no doubt that most of the time we are only writing in for a chance to win a newly released game, but you would find the vast majority of people that play games really do get pissed off over it eventually. Do you think gaming consoles are lifting our anger to higher levels every time we can't do something? Obviously not everyone writes to criticise others' work, because it isn't a place to send your complaints and frustration, but a lot of people do so.

I know for a fact that I'm not the only

person out there that doesn't turn into a monster every time something doesn't go to plan. But hey, keep in mind it's only a game and don't waste your life away working yourself to a boiling point over something that doesn't physically exist.

So for goodness sake stop using postal to let your anger out, but write about the things you like.

Luke C via email

Amen to that, Luke. While we'll always continue to print the odd negative letter that makes a decent or unusual point, we'd much rather see mail about positive things going on, because there are plenty of good things happening on PS2 to focus on.

TAKE SHAME!

Luv the magazine, have been buying them as soon as they hit the stands since the first ed. I just had a quick query - I've seen 16MB memory cards being sold on www.ebay.com.au. Have you guys heard anything about them? They don't look like Sony official products, and seem to be coming out of the UK. Would that have implications on the region zoning and use of hardware etc on the PS2 in Australia if I bought one?

Keep up the good work.

Eugene

Even though a card for the UK market should be compatible with your PS2 here, we must point out that it's much safer to stick with the official product. There are so many third party memory cards that have come out over the years that there's no way we can say which ones are more reliable than the other, but be aware that non-official memory cards have proven to be far more likely to have problems with save files corrupting. It's happened to a couple of OPS2 staff members in the past, and we all stick to the official products these days for that very reason.

SYSTEM SELECTIVE

Great job on the mag but you might not agree with my main point. What I want to say is that game titles that are made for multiple consoles are not that good. This is due to the developers concentrating on many consoles at once. The result of this is crap games for PS2 and better games for the other consoles.

Now this really pisses me off mainly because it seems that the 40 million PS2 owners around the world and the 500,000 owners in Australia get the short end of the stick.

I mean look at Turok: Evolution Acclaim said that the game would be the same on all three consoles but the Gamecube and X-box games were far better in graphics and multiplayer modes. Heaps of other games are crap as well due to this.

But of course games like Tony Hawk 4 and other titles are great. Games that are just on Sony like Ratchet & Clank, Devil May Cry, GTA3, GTA: Vice City are excellent because they were built for the PS2 and only the PS2 (and some are on PC). You would think that developers would see the PS2 more important due to its popularity.

What do you guys think?

Jake Ashmore NSW

Your hunch was right, we don't agree, simply because it has proven to vary from title to title. It's not a case of one system always having the best version of any given game (despite what a certain console manufacturer keeps claiming). Take Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 for example, the PS2 had the best version of all the current next-gen consoles. Or there's TimeSplitters 2, which was virtually identical on all systems. We'd agree that games made for one system only are more likely to be better optimised to be suited to that system's capabilities, but there's just too many games that are out on multiple systems that are great games for it to be considered a rule of thumb.

REALITY CHECK

Love the DVD demo, but concerned about the mag. I need you to clear a few things up for me and a lot of other concerned people out there. Your magazine is really falling behind with its reviews. There are games on the shelf at EB that you still haven't even reviewed yet. Games like LOTR: The Two Towers, Harry Potter and Turok (although now reviewed) was extremely late. I usually rely on your reviews when I go shopping for games but without your advice I bought Turok: Evolution, a game that clearly sucked. My 100 hard earned dollars were wasted on a shiny beer mat, I bought it from Big W and could not take it back. I was extremely disappointed that I was not warned of this open display of crapness. Please explain your bad timing for me because I thought the official mag would be a bit more up to date. Don't you have special rights to game information and preview games? Honestly if it were a snake you'd be dead.

Corey Crompton

We're afraid that even with the best connections of a gaming mag in Australia, we can't get everything in time to get the reviews for every game before they're out. Despite the fact that we get to review a lot of stuff early enough that it'll get to you before it's on sale, it's ultimately up to the publishers and distributors to get the games to us before they're released so we can do so. Sometimes this is due to the developers or publishers being overly protective of their code due to concerns over piracy.

There are also times when we're sent a game just before it's released, but it's not in time for the review to hit the streets before the game does. Keep in mind that after we finish making the magazine, it has to be physically manufactured by the printers and then distributed. Monthly magazines are finished a few weeks before they go on sale.

A final thought for you. While we get the odd awesome game at release, having to wait till then is often an indication as to how confident the publisher is about the game in question. If you had a stinky game, would you be in a rush for the press to find out so they could tell everyone?

TEKKEN THE BEST PLAYERS?

I'm writing to you to say a few things about the Tekken 4 competition. It says you are looking for Australia's best gamer, so you put on a competition, which is great. But there's one thing wrong with this.

You made the first part on Survival. Why's that? And I'm telling you that all

you're going to find are freaks that play the game 24-7. If you wanted a real competition you would have made it one-on-one all the way through, and I'll bet that you would have got a better champion.

I'm pretty damned sure that them freaks that got over 100 aren't that good. Also, I know I'm one of the best out there, all I need to do is prove it, then you would see.

Dylan NSW

We hear you Dylan, but the major reason that survival has been used to narrow down the field is that it's the only fair way to let everyone enter, because to get everyone to play one-on-one means that the players would have to all meet on the one day, and that might be impossible for some people due to other commitments. Survival mode may not be the ideal way of doing this, but that doesn't change the fact that the best players are the ones who'll get the best scores. Sure, there'll be a few folk who are really good at Survival mode that won't be the best in one-on-one matches, but the best entrant in the country is always going to be one of the top scoring players, and that's what matters.

A word of advice from OPS2, if you can't get that score yourself, don't knock the folks who can. Your call on the players who got over 100 victories not being that good just sounds like a case of sour grapes. Trash talking about being one of the best is pointless when the top ten players beat you by 47 to 168 victories (yes, we looked). And finally, the winners should be 'freaks' who play the game 24-7, the people who play the most are always going to be the best.

THE MISSING LINK

I have ordered a PS2 link-up cable (for TimeSplitters 2, of course) and was just wondering what other PS2 games took advantage of link up. Games don't have any link up indication on the back of their box.

Could you please come up with a list of games with how many players are supported? Thanks,

Ben via email

Much multiplayer gaming goodness awaits you Ben! Here's the titles that support i-Link: Age of Empires 2, Armored Core 2, Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec, Silent Scope 2, Time Crisis 2, TimeSplitters 2, Unreal Tournament. OPS2 expect this list to grow quite rapidly once online gaming takes off, since i-Link gaming is just a different way of networking.

HARDCORE

Tips, tricks, cheats and challenges courtesy of OPS2!



Knackered. That's what we are at the *Official PS2 Tips Magazine*. Thanks mainly to the fact that we've been playing *GTA: Vice City*, but we've also been cracking the hard bits of *TimeSplitters 2*, and flooring bosses in *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Nice work if you can get it.

Richie Young

Richie Young, Official Tips Guru

IN HARDCORE THIS MONTH

086...TIMESPLITTERS 2.....GUIDE
090...THE SIMPSONS SKATBOARDING...CHEATS
090...TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003...CHEATS
090...THIS IS SOCCER 2003.....CHEATS
090...MEN IN BLACK II.....CHEATS
090...TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4.....CHEATS
090...007: NIGHTFIRE.....CHEATS
090...TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER.....CHEATS
090...THE LORD OF THE RINGS:
THE TWO TOWERS.....CHEATS
090...THE LORD OF THE RINGS:
THE TWO TOWERS.....TIPS

■ YOU
WANT MORE?
There's a whole
magazine of tips
on the shelves
now!

WALKTHROUGH

TIMESPLITTERS 2

Get past the puzzles and bosses as we trade tactics on the four hardest levels.

LEVEL FIVE

NEO TOKYO 2019

A Follow a girl hacker back to the hacker's base. If she (or any of the cameras or floating cop cars) spots you, it's game over. The very second you start, drop off to the left and leg it forward (avoid the cameras). Go right around the street and you'll find a shopping hallway on the left. There are two windows on the left with a Pistol, Sniper Rifle and Ammo. Grab 'em then retreat the way you came, taking out all cameras in your path. Grab the Shield in the window on the left. A turning will appear on the left, take it but use the sniper rifle to take the out camera at the bottom of the road. All this must be done quickly or the girl will catch up with you. Use the Uplink to see where she is - if she doesn't appear on it, you've got some breathing space.

SEWER RATS

The stairs leading down into the sewers will take you to the secret base where the hacker's heading. Run down the tunnel and drop off to the left. Crouch and hide in this corner until she catches up and walks past. Slowly follow her - don't overtake her or make any noise and keep your Uplink on.

When she turns at the top, hug the wall on the right so she doesn't see you. When she enters the base, run over to the left of the entrance. Another hacker will join her - when they start walking up, enter the room on the left. Use the camera and switch to the view that shows the laptop.

When the girl reaches that laptop and uses it, you will receive the password. Run up the corridor and shoot the hacker in the back of the head. Enter the laptop room and use the computer to open the door. Kill the hacker then take out the mini-gun on the roof. Go left and down the corridor shooting all the hackers. Enter the room at the top, grab the Digicam and Shield then take the SBP90 Machine Gun and the Astro Lander Cartridge from the lockers. Exit, go left and then left again. Take a picture of the purple plans on the wall. Leave the room and take a picture of the freaky-looking stuff in the locked room. There's your evidence sorted, but before you do anything else, take out that other mini-gun down the corridor.

TIME MACHINE

Return to the room containing all the pick-ups and download the evidence on to the computer. All hell breaks loose. Run into the previously locked room and shut down the Time Machine by activating the switch on the far right of the room. This'll kill the TimeSplitter, but you must also get out

TIMESPLITTERS 2

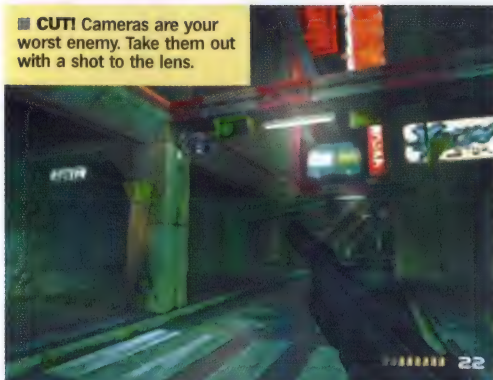
■ PLAYERS 1-4
■ MEMORY CARD SPACE
245KB
■ DIFFICULTY HARD
■ COMPLETION TIME
5 DAYS
■ REVIEWED OPS2#08

VERDICT

"Expansive in every sense, this is an essential purchase for anyone in possession of a PS2 and a central nervous system."

Graphics	10	Overall
Sound	10	
Gameplay	09	10
Life span	10	

■ **CUT!** Cameras are your worst enemy. Take them out with a shot to the lens.



of the room sharpish and kill the hackers who now turn up. Retreat out the entire base the way you came in – there are hackers here so be cautious and use the sniper rifle when need be. Just as you reach the stairs taking you back to the street, a hacker will chuck a grenade your way. When you hear it bouncing, back off! Once it blows, hug the wall on the left and aim up – you can see the tip of a hacker's head waiting for a well-placed shot. Crouching behind the bins is always a good way to avoid hits, as is using your Uplink to see incoming baddies. No cameras are activated now, it's all quiet except for the odd hacker. Head over to the left – there's a hacker on the right hiding behind a pillar. Kill him, then head further down and the ramp will drop exposing two coppers. Wipe them out and steal their Sci-Fi Guns. Now head back around the streets – there are hackers and coppers everywhere. The Time Crystal can now be located. Mow down the baddie holding it, grab it and jump through the Time Portal. Nice one.

LEVEL SEVEN

ATOM SMASHER 1972

■ You start without any weapons – your first kill will be with your fists! For most of this level, you'll be on a timer so run and shoot like you've got a wasp up your arse. The second the laser brings the door up, leg it to the other door (grabbing the Uplink) and hit the switch. When the door unlocks, follow the path round to the right and run down the corridor, hugging the wall on the right to avoid the camera. Do this fast enough and the goon will still be facing away, so you can punch him in the back of the head. Grab his Gun and shoot the other goon to the right. Kill the goon who comes from behind then get the scientist to deactivate the bomb.

Now backtrack and head right when you see the camera. Run up to the switch and unlock the next door. The next few goons can be popped in the back of the head, but the chap in black's got double Handguns. Kill him and grab 'em for yourself. Flick the switch to open the next door then go left. The passage down the side is swarming with goons. Use the Twin Guns to wipe them out then shoot the barrels on the right. Get the scientist to deactivate the bomb. Now leg it down the baddie-free path. There's a mini-gun at the bottom – hug the right of the wall and use pistol shots from a safe distance to take it out. Goons will appear at the top of the first flight of stairs when you enter the next room. The one on the right has a Sniper Rifle so finish him first. Spin the wheel on the pipe and grab the Remote Mines from under the stairs (chuck with **Q**, detonate with **Q**). When you start to run up the stairs, a yellow goon pops up. Pop him then creep up the stairs. Look behind and you'll see a goon in black – shoot him before he sees you.

FIRE-FIGHT

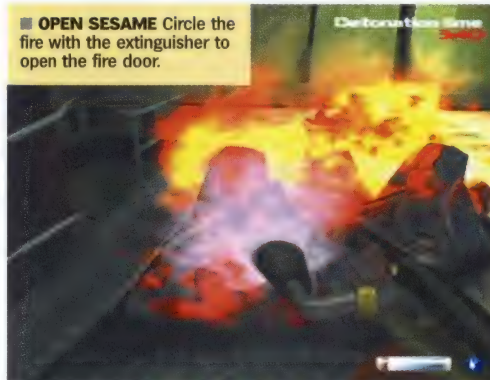
Grab the Fire Extinguisher (and all weapons and Ammo) and use it to put the fire out. This opens the door on the right. Snipe the goon on top of the container then, as you run in, the container door will open. Shoot the goon inside and grab his S47 Machine Gun and a handy Shield. Wipe out the goons to the left grabbing all the Ammo they leave behind. Watch out for the odd grenade being chucked at

you – you'll hear them bounce. In a container on the right you'll find Grenades for your S47. Eventually, you'll find a door on the right – go through it and enter the room. Spin the wheel in this room to turn off a jet of steam in another room. Exit back into the main hallway and shoot the mini-gun with your S47. Go through the door on the other side, turn around and shoot the goons through the window.

MAG-NUTTY

Go up to the panel – you've got to control a magnet to pick up the moving bomb and drop it into the radioactive bin on the right. Exit, head back down the hallway and take out the ground mini-gun with a grenade. Switch to the sniper rifle to take out the goon on top of the container. Wipe out the other goons with your pistols and grab any fire extinguishers you pass. When you pass through the middle of the last two containers, turn around and shoot the two goons inside them. Put the fire out, snipe the goon positioned up and to the left then turn left and snipe the other goon up on the platform in the distance. If you've got over two minutes left, flick the switch on the right to bring the lift down – flick it again (when stood on it) to take it back up. While rising, fire a grenade up to destroy the mini-gun above. Now run around the platform to get the sniper Ammo and Grenades. Drop off and keep running in the same direction as before. When the level opens up again, look up and you'll see a goon. Snipe him then steam into the level

■ **OPEN SESAME** Circle the fire with the extinguisher to open the fire door.



taking out the three goons here. Flick the switch to bring the gate down first then get one of the two scientists in one of the containers to disable the bomb. Grab a Shield from another container and round up Ammo while you're waiting for the gate to drop. Once it's down, run through. The lasers on the right will kill you if you touch them and need disabling. Take a left, shoot the goon around the corner then charge up the ramp letting rip with your S47 – these baddies have got machine guns and can cause serious damage. At the top, a scientist will take care of the last bomb. You're now off the timer, but things are tough. Flick the switch to open the door and you'll see two goons in the distance; one on the left, one on the right.

STEAMY PIE

Snipe them in the head before crossing the red and white pipe on the left – the one with the steam jets. They turn on and off so time your progress and stay in the middle or you'll fall off. On the other side, enter the door, go right and take out the mini-gun with a grenade. Run around until you find a control room then flick the switch and the lasers will be disabled. Run out and drop back down into the container room. Run forward and take a right where the lasers used to be. Fire a few grenades to take out the goons here. When you step over the yellow and black line, Khallos appears behind you. Mow him down sharpish (TimeSplitters start piling in so use the wall as cover) and grab the Time Crystal. Run into the reactor room and flick the three switches (run backwards as you approach them so you shoot the TimeSplitters that would otherwise be giving you serious backache). When all three are pulled, the Portal appears. No prizes for guessing the next move!

LEVEL EIGHT

AZTEC RUINS 1920

■ You start with a pistol and a cheeky monkey. Follow him up the path and you'll meet a load of monkeys. Use their hairy heads for target practice. Over in the far left corner you'll see a beehive – keep away from this. Go left, follow the path and a native will jump out with a Crossbow. Kill him and take it. This weapon can be lit at the end and is great for torching baddies and beehives. Go down and to the right, and you'll find a stone table with a light on the top. Light up the crossbow then shoot the hive over to the side.

Follow the path around and a big wooden golem will appear. He can only be killed with fire, so give some. He'll run back – follow him and a native will spot you; retreat and the native will run into the flaming golem and torch himself. You can pick up Crossbow Bolts and reuse them.

The gold door up ahead can't be opened by normal means, so ignore it for now. Go right and follow the path. When the path opens up, another wood golem appears from the left. Spark him up (light your bow on the torches in the tunnel) then take out the beehive on the right with the same fiery fire. Go forward then left down the pathway to the right of the diagonally collapsed pillar. Shoot the native and go right up the stairs. Kill the monkey through the window on the right (for fun) and keep going round.

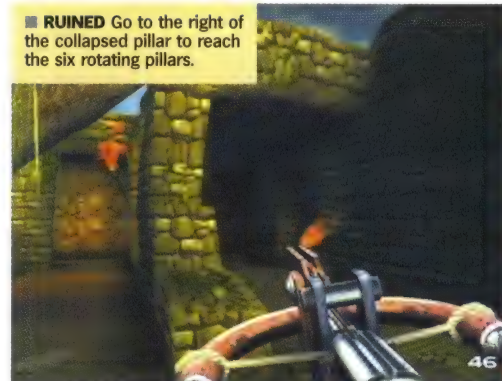
PESKY PILLARS

You'll now encounter an open space which is home to six pillars. There are two monkeys on top of two of the pillars who throw melons. These melons explode with enormous strength so dodge them if you can. Take at least one of the monkeys out from a safe distance before running in. Take a native out (another one will then turn up from behind). Set fire to the beehive through the gap and grab the Shield under the ramp. Now, those six pillars are a puzzle that opens the gold door with the symbol on it. Another native turns up while you're doing this so be ready. You must spin the middle section around on each pillar so that all the symbols face each other. All six need to have the symbol that's on the door facing inward and the symbols to the sides need to match. Here's a tip: on both sides, one of the three pillars only has one door symbol, so that must be facing inward. Now match the symbols on the sides with the other pillars. The gold door now opens and two natives offer themselves for slaughter.

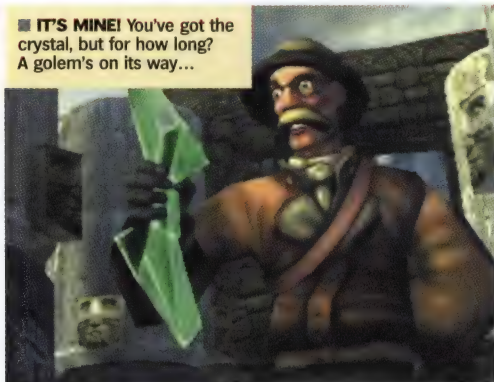
ROPEY BRIDGE

Run into the doorway and down the tunnel. Take the monkey out on the rope bridge then the one to the left on the grassy platform. Cross the bridge and run around to the switch which you need to pull. This opens the first golden door you saw early in the level, which you now need to backtrack to (go right after the rope bridge where the wood spikes have been removed, it's quicker). The place is swarming with natives – the Time Crystal is located when you reach the golden door. Drop down into the hole and follow the tunnel – it opens into a path. Kill the monkey on the floor, the one on the right then the one in the distance on the left, otherwise they'll start chucking melons at you. This is the lost temple, a place of extremely

■ **RUINED** Go to the right of the collapsed pillar to reach the six rotating pillars.



➔ **IT'S MINE!** You've got the crystal, but for how long? A golem's on its way...



hard trials that you must overcome. Run down the path and take out the two natives. Go in and aim left, taking the other native out. Go round and another gap will appear, producing yet another native. Down the big stairway, you'll see two more natives waiting. Try and take them out with a bolt to the head, if not, mow them down as they run up the stairs. You can pick your Ammo back up so fire rapidly – your health is far more important. Run down the stairs and flick the switch under them. This'll open the doorway, which you should aim for, grabbing the Shield next to it. There are natives on these stairs so be ready.

GO GOLEMS GO

You now have to defeat seven golems, and they're tougher than old boots. None of your weapons will scratch 'em. There are two ways to kill them. The first is by making use of the monkeys on the pillars. The melons they throw are powerful enough to kill golems. Get the melons to hit the golems by circling around the monkeys with the golems chasing you – the melon will be aimed at you, but the golem might end up where you were when the monkey took his aim. Another way, and this must be done from a distance, is to run at the monkey with the golem in hot pursuit. The monkey will chuck his melon at you but if you dodge them at the last second, they'll miss you and hit the golem. You could try to persuade the golems to fall down the trapdoors – anything that falls in them dies, including you! Try playing a matador and bull game with them over the trapdoors, they might just fall in. Keep the monkeys alive until the golems are dead. Then kill the monkeys. Once you've defeated the first two, go to the other half of the temple and kill the other two. At the bottom there's a Shield hidden in the door to the right. Go into the exit at the top and you'll see a monkey who runs away. Follow the path. Spikes jab out at you here – just get close to them, let them stick out and pass as soon as they've retracted.

FOUL FACES

You'll now find yourself on a bridge that doesn't quite reach the other side. Pick up the Sniper Rifle and shoot out the evil stone faces. The faces rotate one at a time to show red eyes that fire lasers at you. The one nearest on the right goes first, then nearest on the left. Next up is the one in the distance to the right of the doorway. With the first three removed, you can now keep a check on the rest and take them out as they turn. The place then starts to shake as the bridge is lengthened to reach the other door. Run up the steps and kill the native that appear. The tunnel starts to go red – there's fire that needs to be avoided here. Take the native on the left out before you run onto the stairs. Now, stay exactly in the middle of the stairs (don't touch the fire!) and run down. When you reach the bottom, head right and through the stone doors. There's the Time Crystal, but the last three golem's are here and



there are no monkeys to help you this time. There is, however, a Grenade Launcher which will easily take them out. Now grab the Crystal and head through the Portal.

LEVEL NINE ROBOT FACTORY 2315

A Take out the two robots that appear at the door (they have sci-fi bouncing bullet guns so watch for rebounds). Walk through the door and, as soon as the robots materialise, reverse back into the room and take them all out from there. Go left, and left again through the door and follow the path until you reach a room containing robots and a laser. Wait until the machine firing the laser is next to the robots then blow it up. The explosion will kill some of the robots, your plasma rifle will finish the job. Go up and left until you reach a joystick terminal. Use this to take control of a railbot – smash it into the green laser door to disable it. Grab the shield over to the right then make your way through where the laser screen was and flick the switch, this creates a bridge which you'll need shortly. There are 10 Plasma Grenades down there, too – save these for desperate moments. Backtrack to where you started the level then head down and go through the wide silver doors.

TED ROGERS

There are two dusty bins in here and their lids pop up to reveal twin lasers that fire green death your way. Plasma shots to the lasers will take them out. A robot materialises too – take him out. Go through the next set of doors. The two hulking swines on the right use the same plasma rifle as you and are very dangerous. Chuck a plasma grenade at each one – if they survive, a couple of shots will finish them off. Run up and through the silver doors on the right. Take the two dusty bins out then open (but don't go through) the next doors. A robot is making his way down this ramp – wait until he appears then chuck a plasma grenade at the back of his head. Watch out for the fire bursts that appear on the right. Run up the ramp, take the dusty bin out then cross the bridge. Three more robots appear on the bridge. Kill them, the dusty bin on the other side and any railbots that go under the bridge. Follow the path around and you'll come to four cannon-type objects. Two of these will spit out a homing bomb which must be shot down. Keep going and you'll see a big energy mode to the left. Go down the ramp and grab the Shield under it. Now you've got two big robots, one on each side, tooled up with the deadly Laser. This cannot be dodged once fired as its ray moves at the speed of light, but when you see a little red light on the gun it means it's about to fire, so use that as a warning to move out of its path. Take out the one on the right with a grenade, grab his Laser then go after the other one. If you hold down **LB** you can use it to create a shield (**LB** projects a laser). **LB** powers it up for a more beefy shot, but uses power that's in short supply. The silver doors both lead to the same place, so go on through (watch out for homing bomb cannons!) and destroy the drone on the floor. The weapon in the light is the Electrotool – you'll need this to destroy the four energy modes.

NASTY SPIDER BIN

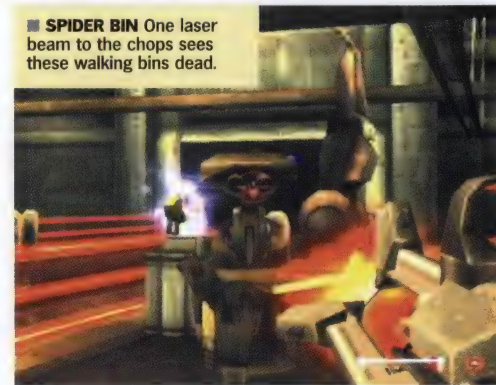
But, that's no ordinary dusty bin next to it. Oh no. It's a tricky spider bin. As it's transforming, release a shot between the eyes or a plasma grenade at its face then leg it. Grab the Electrotool then take out the four robots that arrive. Make sure the ray doesn't touch the red laser wall or you'll receive damage. The electrotool regenerates, so you can run back and stock up on power whenever you like. Head back to the energy

mode and use the electrotool to spin it into destruction. You'll now see a red laser door drop – go through it (up the ramp) and you'll see a rail just above you. Destroy any railbots that appear then ready a plasma grenade. To the right is a massive robot that's a git to kill. Use the grenade on him then grab any extra Grenades and make your way down the path. There's another spiderbot down here – use a grenade (try and save the laser for the end of the level) then grab the Shield. Another posse of robots appears out of nowhere. Do the deed, grab the Electrotool then jump on the joystick...

RAIL BOTTY

This controls another railbot. Take the railbot into the gap above the red laser door and around into a new room. You'll find another energy mode that's protected by a shield which is powered by three little boxes at the base of the mode. Shoot them up one at a time and the shield will shut down and the electricity in the room will destroy the mode. Use this railbot to take any other railbots down, then return and

SPIDER BIN One laser beam to the chops sees these walking bins dead.



enter the big room. There are lots of homing bombs in these cannons – all you can do is walk forward and retreat back when they appear and take them down from a distance. Run through the next door and you'll see another joystick. This is perfectly targeted on the next spiderbot so leave it for a second. Run into the next room, grab the Plasma Ammo then head towards the spiderbot. The second it starts its transformation, leg it to the joystick and kill it. Now take the railbot around so it's facing the exit of this room. Run into the level, take out the dusty bin and, when the robot appears, run to the joystick and shoot it with the railbot. It'll shoot back and destroy the railbot, but you'll have weakened it. Head into the next room and throw a grenade at the big robot with the laser. Now grab the Shield under the ramp. When you reach the bottom of the ramp, a spiderbot appears at the top. Use the laser on it then go over to the other computer to activate the crane. This'll bring the third mode over to you – electrotool it to pieces. Use the next computer to move the energy mode across the roof. Use lasers to take out the three robots from a distance, then leg it up and around the ramps. Kill the spiderbot with a grenade then grab the Shield from under the ramp. Cross over to the other side, take out the next two spiderbots and use the shield above the ramp if your current one has depleted. Touch the terminal, grab the Rockets from the room and use one on the green laser door, which takes you back to where the third mode was destroyed.

VALLEY OF DEATH

All hell now breaks loose! When the gate drops, it means everyone's dead. Go and collect Ammo, then head down the new pathway. The Time Crystal is located as you make your way into the factory core. You've now got to fight a robot that makes Metal Gear look like R2D2! There's a little robot on the right – shoot him, grab the Homing Rockets then keep letting rip into the front of the robot where the Machinist is. The rockets and the little robot keep regenerating, so use your plasma rifle to take the robot out then use the rockets on the Machinist. When you've beaten the Machinist, run up the stairs, grab the Time Crystal, and run through the Portal.

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PRESENTS

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CODE-U-LIKE

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Write to us and we'll ease your pain.

■ THE SIMPSONS SKATEBOARDING

(SLES 50754)

Here's some codes to make this slapstick skateboarding game one step sillier. For all these cheats go to the character select screen, hold down **11**, **12**, **11** and **12**, and while holding those down enter the codes.

Action	Code
Big-Head Homer.....	Ⓢ, ⓧ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ
Tightie White Homer.....	Ⓢ, Ⓐ, ⓧ, Ⓢ
Gangster Bart.....	Ⓢ, ⓧ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ
Gangster Lisa.....	Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, ⓧ

■ TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

(SLES 51282)

Here's an assortment of extra characters to unlock in EA's latest golf-sim. For all these cheats go to the options screen and enter the codes.

Character	Code
Super Tiger Woods.....	SUNDAY
Cedric "Ace" Andrews.....	IAM#1
Charles Howell III.....	BANDPANTS
Dominic "The Don" Donatello.....	GODFATHER
Hamish.....	MCRUFF
Jim Furyk.....	THESWING
Josey "Superstar" Scott.....	SUPERSTAR
Justin Leonard.....	JUSTINTIME

■ THIS IS SOCCER 2003

(SLES 51039)

Here's an assortment of codes to turn the 'world game' into the 'weird game'. Enter all of these cheats/codes at the main menu screen.

Action	Code
View Credits.....	12, 11, 11, 12, 12, 12
Farm Noises.....	11, 11, 12, ↑, ↓, →
Clown Noises.....	11, 11, 12, 12, 12, 11
Fast Announcers.....	12, 12, 11, 12, 12, 12
View All FMV Scenes.....	12, 11, 11, 12, 12

■ MEN IN BLACK II

(SLES 50789)

Want to breath some much needed life into this game? Here's the codes to do so. All of the following codes are to be entered at the "Press Start" screen.

Unlock Agent Data	↑, ↓, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ←, Ⓢ, →, ⓧ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ↑, Ⓢ
Unlock Alien Data	Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ↓, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, →, ⓧ, ←, Ⓢ
View 'Making of' movie	Ⓢ, 12, 12, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, ↓, Ⓢ, →, Ⓢ, ⓧ, ↑
Unlock Full Beam	←, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, →, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ←, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ
Unlock Full Homing	→, ↑, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ←, ←, Ⓢ, ←, Ⓢ, ←
Unlock Full Bolt	←, →, ↑, ↓, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, ←, ↓, Ⓢ, Ⓢ

■ TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

(SLES 51130)

OPS2 bring you a collection of codes to spice up the Birdman's latest board game. Enter the following codes in the cheats screen, found under options.

Action	Code
'The Matrix'.....	NOSPOON
Moon Gravity.....	SUPERFLY

Unlock Pre-made skaters

Enter the following names when creating your skater to unlock the character.

Names:
Aaron Skillman
Ben Scott Pye
DDT
Jim Jagger
Lisa G Davies
Zac ZIG Drake
Team Chicken
ConMan
Parking Guy

■ 007 NIGHTFIRE

(SLES 51258)

After more features and characters in your multi-player games? Try some of these codes to unlock a host of goodies.

Unsurprisingly, all of these cheats are entered in the "Secret Unlocks" screen.

Unlock	Code
Assassination.....	SCOPE
Demolition.....	TNT
Double Weapons.....	MAYHEM
Explosive Scenery.....	BOOM
GoldenEye Strike.....	ORBIT
Protection.....	GUARDIAN
Team King of the Hill.....	TEAMWORK
Uplink.....	TRANSMIT
All Characters.....	PARTY

■ TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER

(SLES 51200)

Here's a few codes to tie you down sport. Enter the following codes during gameplay.

Show all items	11, 11, 11, 11, Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, 12
Unlock Aquarang, Elemental Rang and Dive & Swim	11, 11, 11, 11, Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ
Unlock the Technorangs	11, 11, 11, 11, Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ

■ LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

(SLES 51252)

Why struggle across Middle Earth needlessly? Pause the game hold down **11**, **12**, **11** and **12**, and while holding those enter the codes.

Action	Code
Always Devastating.....	Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ
Small Enemies.....	Ⓐ, Ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ
All Upgrades.....	Ⓐ, Ⓢ, Ⓐ, Ⓢ
Invulnerable.....	Ⓐ, Ⓢ, ⓧ, Ⓢ
Slo-Mo.....	Ⓐ, Ⓢ, ⓧ, Ⓢ
Invulnerable.....	Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ⓧ, Ⓢ

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WHO'S THE BOSS? THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

When defeating bosses stick with Aragorn at first; he's the most balanced character and has some very powerful moves...

FIRST BOSS

GATES OF MORIA - WATCHER

The strategy to defeat this lurking monstrosity is simple when you know how, but if you don't, you could find yourself knocked to the floor time after frustrating time. Basically, there are three attacking tentacles. Keep tapping **Ⓢ** to block until all three tentacles have been deflected and are waving about in the air. Slice the third tentacle with your sword, quickly press **11** and hold down **ⓧ** to ready a full-strength arrow, because his head pops up - a prime target. Repeat this method about four or five times to kill it without taking a single hit.

SECOND BOSS

BALIN'S TOMB - CAVE TROLL

When he first bursts into the tomb, don't face him head on unless absolutely necessary - his club causes a lot of damage. Circle around to his side or rear, use a couple of heavy strikes, then jump back using **12** to avoid his swing. Make sure you keep your health topped up because in the second section there's none to pick up. After dealing about 20 percent damage to him, you'll end up on the walkway. Position yourself just to the side of one of the pillars (so his chain strikes it, not you) and shoot him as quickly as possible, moving on when the pillar is destroyed. Kill the occasional goblin that runs at you, pick up the arrows to the right if you run out, and you shouldn't even take a single hit.

THIRD BOSS

AMON HEN - LURTZ

Getting to Lurtz is actually more difficult than beating the great Uruk Hai himself. He starts

off firing arrows from a distance, so return the favour. Get into a pattern of blocking arrows with **Ⓢ**, drawing and firing as quickly as possible then blocking the next arrow and so on. You should move onto the second stage before he summons any Uruk Hai to bother you. His sword attacks are very powerful and you can't block them, so don't even try. Run around and circle one of the white statues, keeping it between you and him, until one of his attacks makes his sword jam through it. While he's struggling to free the blade, hit him with your most powerful attacks - rinse and repeat. As ever, try not to get hit.





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Shortlist

Your definitive guide to the ever expanding library of PlayStation 2 games.



So you've just bought a PlayStation 2, and you're confronted by a dauntingly huge line-up of games to choose from at your local gaming store. Now what?

The Shortlist is *OPS2*'s one-stop guide to getting an idea of what's hot and what's not. As time goes on and new games come out, we drop some of the older games that don't warrant being remembered, replacing them with newer games that score well in the reviews section.

If you just want to find the best of the best, look for the games that receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award.

GLOSSARY

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the latest and most up-to-date information but don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been round since the Atari 2600 by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.

AI: Artificial Intelligence.

Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.

Boards: Snowboarders or games featuring the alpine sport.

Coin-op: Coin-operated arcade videogames.

Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame (also 'FMV').

CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.

Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.

D-pad: Direction pad on PS2 controller.

Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.

Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).

ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.

E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).

Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.

FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg Quake III).

Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.

High res: High resolution (graphics).

HUD: Head Up Display.

Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc.

Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc.

Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics.

L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.

Mini-games: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.

Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.

PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.

Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.

RPG: Role-playing game.

RTS: Real-time strategy.

R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.

Sim: Simulation.

Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.

USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2.

"If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here."

007 NIGHTFIRE ★ OVERALL 08

Aside from the occasionally iffy AI, this Bond title has enough variety to make it a worthy single-player game, and the multiplayer aspects give it longevity.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP OVERALL 07

The World Cup version of FIFA 2002 with more pizzazz, nifty effects for star player and a serious challenge at the highest difficulty level, but sadly lacking in game modes.

7 BLADES OVERALL 06

Ninja-styled adventure with a 'healthy' dose of chop-socky gameplay.

18 WHEELER OVERALL 06

Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.

ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER OVERALL 07

Best Ace Combat yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions. Best with a flight-stick of some kind.

AFL LIVE 2003 OVERALL 06

Good enough to be a must buy for footy fans, but not flashy or deep enough to compete with big budget sport sims.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE ★ OVERALL 06

There's more than enough inline action to keep you impressed, entertained and amused until Tony Hawk's 4 says, "Buy me, dude!"

AIRBLADE ★ OVERALL 06

Intricate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs - everything you could want hoverboarding to be. Back to the Future anyone?

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002 OVERALL 07

An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.

ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE OVERALL 06

An undeniably scary survival horror game series, but one that fails to frighten the pants off the PS2 in this comeback.

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0 OVERALL 07

Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler Wetrrix. Essentially it's Tetris with water. Weird, but worthwhile.

ARCTIC THUNDER OVERALL 07

Crude visuals, but plenty of fast and furious gameplay.

ARMORED CORE 2 OVERALL 07

Infinitely-tweakable first-person mech shooter. Not for the casual gamer after a quick fix, but perfect for those that love their sims.

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE OVERALL 02

Very dull helicopter game. Hardly surprising from arguably the worst series of games to grace a console.

ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE OVERALL 01

On-rail shooter that manages to sink to new depths of soldiering tedium. Avoid at all costs.

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2 OVERALL 03

Another poorly realised shooter, from the series that stars the little green plastic soldiers.

AUTO MODELLISTA ★ OVERALL 05

The love-child of cel-shaded graphics and Gran Turismo. Despite its cartoony appearance, this is a fairly serious racing game.

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE ★ OVERALL 08

Play D&D on a console! Quite simplistic and arcadey, but this is still a great RPG that adds nicely to the PS2's line up.

BARBARIAN OVERALL 07

A rough-cut fighting game with RPG elements and branching storylines.

YOUR KEY TO SHORTLIST

GOLD
Only for games that scored the elusive 10/10.

SILVER
Awarded to games with a mighty 9/10.

BRONZE
Given to games that scored an impressive 8/10.

TOP 5 PLATFORM GAMES



1. RATCHET & CLANK

Comic sci-fi with bloody big guns.

2. JAK AND DAXTER

Platform perfection from Naughty Dog.

3. HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING

A hundred games in one, you say?

4. MAXIMO

Defiantly old-skool antics from Capcom.

5. KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

Sadly overlooked, cel-shaded cutie.

BATMAN VENGEANCE OVERALL 06

Interesting action adventure, but just a little too 'on rails' to provide a real challenge.

BLADE II OVERALL 04

Cruddy controls stop this otherwise peachy beat 'em up from realising its full potential.

BLOOD OMEN 2 OVERALL 06

An occasionally very satisfying blood sucking adventure let down by largely unoriginal gameplay.

BURNOUT ★ OVERALL 08

OutRun grows up, and learns how to crash properly. Thrilling, edgy race action that will threaten your no claims bonus.

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT ★ OVERALL 08

An even more intense racing experience than its predecessor. The Fast & the Furious in a video game.

CAPCOM VS. SNK 2 ★ OVERALL 09

A superb 2D beat-'em-up from the house that knows all there is to know about combat. With endless two-player fun.

CART FURY: CHAMPIONSHIP RACING OVERALL 06

Arcade racer with crazy physics and a dose of high-speed hard shouldering.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3 ★ OVERALL 09

The latest McRae game set new standards in rally racing visuals, with particularly impressive representation of car damage and weather effects. A must have for offroad racing fans.

COMMANDOS 2 ★ OVERALL 08

A daunting but extremely worthy and rewarding strategy game where the player controls a team of crack operatives in WWII missions.

CONFLICT ZONE OVERALL 06

A pretty run-of-the-mill RTS game that cleverly forces you to take account of media coverage.

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTX OVERALL 06

Crash spins onto PS2 but little has changed from PSone. Time for some new ideas with titles like Ratchet & Clank setting the new standards.

CRASHED OVERALL 05

A rather bland and repetitive destruction derby game, minus the derby. Weckless offers more to those who want to see cars get trashed.

CRAZY TAXI ★ OVERALL 08

Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.

CRICKET 2002 ★ OVERALL 09

The best leather-on-willow sim on any console, ever. Relax and make like it's summer.

DARK CLOUD OVERALL 07

An enthralling RPG with atmospheric music and a world-building element thrown in for good measure.

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2 OVERALL 07

Orthodox but impressive, this BMX sim has an inventive array of tricks.

DEAD OR ALIVE 2 OVERALL 07

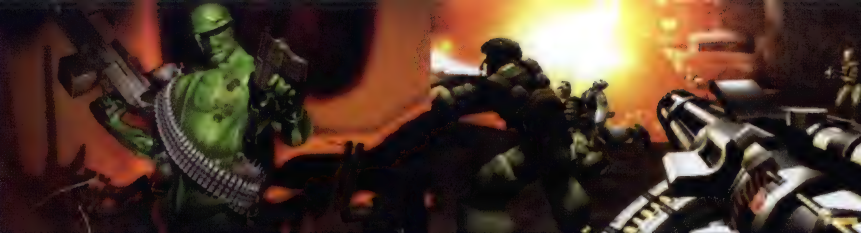
Blistering beat-'em-up that's famous for its stealthy gameplay and collection of extremely well-endowed lady fighters.

DEFENDER OVERALL 07

A modern day 3D shooter based on the '80s arcade classic. Far better than the average retro-remake.

DEUS EX ★ OVERALL 09

The thinking man's action/ shooter/adventure genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Superb.



DEVIL MAY CRY ★ OVERALL 09
Melding rip-roaring battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet? Definitely.

DINO STALKER OVERALL 04
A light-gun game that has a neat exploration element to it, that the developers failed to exploit properly, leaving us with a rather shallow shooter.

DNA OVERALL 06
Gene warfare and confusing puzzles abound in this bizarre manga adventure.

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK OVERALL 04
A first-generation platformer that suffers from Stone Age gameplay and graphics.

DRAGON'S LAIR OVERALL 02
Unplayable retro adventure. Should have stayed firmly stuck on the Laser Disc where it belonged.

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S OVERALL 04
Dismal racer. Fails to evoke any emotion at all.

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE ★ OVERALL 09
Impressive combat sim that rewards commitment with paced and varied gameplay.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 3 ★ OVERALL 08
More of the same great mass battles and explosive action, marred only slightly by samey gameplay.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER THE FUTURE ★ OVERALL 08
You're a dolphin and it's up to you to save the world from an alien invasion. Relax in the new age calm underwater adventure.

ENDGAME ★ OVERALL 09
Sets a new standard in the lightgun shooter genre: Innovative, refreshing and most of all, a tonne of fun.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND ★ OVERALL 08
Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD OVERALL 06
Graphically impressive athletics sim marred only by iffy AI.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT OVERALL 06
Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the sin bin.

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT OVERALL 06
Hardcore gameplay makes this one for basketball heads only.

ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING OVERALL 05
Not-so-extreme skateboarding sim with some unsightly graphical glitches. You're best off sticking with Tony Hawk's.

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING OVERALL 06
Lifelike snowboarding, ruined by unsightly bland graphics, unresponsive controls and a lack of excitement.

EVE: EVE OF EXTINCTION OVERALL 05
A dull, button mashing affair.

EVERGRACE OVERALL 02
An ultimately depressing RPG, that fails to engage the player at any meaningful level.

EVIL TWIN OVERALL 05
Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, so-so animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.

EXTERMINATION OVERALL 07
Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.

EXTREME-G 3 ★ OVERALL 08
A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some 'inspiration' from the Wipeout series. Not for the faint-hearted.

F1 2001 OVERALL 07
Another solid PS2 Formula One title, but ultimately it's a tad soulless.

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000 OVERALL 06
Hardcore F1 fans will find this a little too easy.

FANTAVISION OVERALL 05
The world's first fireworks game. Not enormous, but of rare and random beauty.

FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE OVERALL 07
One of the most realistic racing simulations ever. More for driving game experts than casual racers.

FIFA 2003 ★ OVERALL 08
Despite closing the gap with a new engine that breaks away from ludicrous flashy tricks and delivers a more realistic football simulation, this is still a goal down to Pro Evolution Soccer 2.

FINAL FANTASY X ★ OVERALL 08
Nothing else needs to be said about this brilliant RPG. A classic Square adventure with next-gen presentation and production.

FORMULA ONE 2003 ★ OVERALL 08
Another F1 corker! All the drivers, tracks and cars included. Load it up and feel the speed.

FREEKSTYLE OVERALL 07
This is potentially a great game, but it's scuppered by careless lack of fairness and failure to reward skill with progression.

FUR FIGHTERS ★ OVERALL 08
Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotguns blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.

G1 JOCKEY OVERALL 05
More like an exercise in statistical analysis than a horse racing game, with bland graphics and sound.

GIO GIO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE OVERALL 06
Brilliant cel-shaded graphics bring a cast of weirdo anime characters to life in a fighting game based on a comic series.

GHOST RECON OVERALL 07
A squad based first person shooter that suffers from a cumbersome interface for ordering troops about, often degenerating into arcade-style run-and-gun gaming.

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO OVERALL 06
The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

GITAROO MAN ★ OVERALL 08
If you have a PS2 collection, you should definitely have at least one game like this one in there! Check it out.

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA OVERALL 07
An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.

GRANDIA II OVERALL 05
Expansive, classic RPG adventuring but with horrible graphics and repetitive, uninvolved gameplay.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY ★ OVERALL 09
An even better treat than GTAIII. Cars, crooks, coke, and chaos with total freedom to do what you want, when you want. Funny, frantic. A must have for any serious, or not so serious gamer.

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC ★ OVERALL 09
If you don't know already, GT3 is the greatest driving game in the world. Buy it now.

GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT: 2002 TOKYO-GENEVA ★ OVERALL 08
A more accessible version of GT3, with concept cars. Perfect for those who just want to race, rather than play mechanic.

GRAVITY GAMES OVERALL 04
An unoriginal rip off of the Mat Hoffman series, offering little reason to break away from the aforementioned pearls.

GUMBALL 3000 OVERALL 03
A decidedly crap racing title that fails to deliver on all fronts. Not something to bother with considering how many decent racers are about.

G-SURFERS OVERALL 07
Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

GUILTY GEAR X ★ OVERALL 08
Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

GUNGRAVE OVERALL 06
Bizarre Manga inspired shooting game with gorgeous visuals, but a distinct lack of depth to back up all that eye candy.

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE OVERALL 07
A mech shooter for robot obsessive-types everywhere.

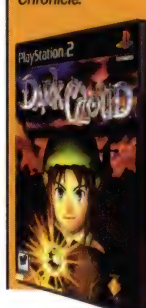
SECOND COMING

We resurrect a title from the gaming graveyard.



DARK CLOUD

Level 5's innovative RPG suffered badly from all the Zelda comparisons. We gave *Dark Cloud* 7/10 saying its plot is cack-handed stuff and the relentless dungeon-crawling sections soon pall. But it's the world-building aspect which really shines. Collecting new houses and furniture to put in your gingerbread-style village soon borders on the obsessive. Getting the layout just right is essential to keep all the inhabitants happy, and you often find yourself just wandering around, admiring your handiwork. How much longer till we see an RPG where your character has a skill level for 'Interior Decorating'? Who would have thought that town planning could be so much fun – roll on *Dark Chronicle*.



HALF-LIFE ★ OVERALL 09
The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in resplendent form. An essential purchase.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS ★ OVERALL 08
Simplistic puzzles and gorgeous graphics makes this a winner for younger fans of the books and films, topped off nicely with Quidditch gaming goodness.

HEADHUNTER OVERALL 07
Dirty Harry meets MGS2 in a world where the law is controlled by bounty hunters. There's a great game hidden here somewhere.

HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING ★ OVERALL 08
An epic platform game that provides a seamless adventure with no loading interrupting the action, even when travelling to another planet!

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC OVERALL 03
Patchy PC-style fantasy adventure.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN ★ OVERALL 08
A disturbingly realistic take on living the life of a hired killer. Not one for the squeamish or pure of heart, but awesome gaming to be had.

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER ★ OVERALL 08
Genuine squads and more instant terrace gratification take ISS up to the PS2 level.

ISS 2 OVERALL 07
More arcadey than PES with better commentary, but dodgy ball physics and animation. Not for soccer purists.

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY ★ OVERALL 09
A brilliant platformer from the makers of *Crash Bandicoot* that introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.

JAMES BOND 007: AGENT UNDER FIRE ★ OVERALL 08
A thrilling single-player Bond experience, with a great four-player mode and beautiful Bond girls.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD OVERALL 03
A motocross game that's just like the real thing (minus the thrills, speed, gritty handling and mud).

JET SKI RIDERS OVERALL 06
Great water effects and Kawasaki-licensed Jet Skis. Shame about the racing...

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO OVERALL 06
A padded-out Training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighter's otherwise rather limited nature.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER ★ OVERALL 08
A bit too similar to Tony Hawk for our liking, but still the best surfing game around.

KESSEN OVERALL 07
A real-time strategy game set in feudal Japan, where you get to command a huge army. Strategy fans only.

KINGDOM HEARTS ★ OVERALL 08
A beautifully produced RPG with Disney and Square characters. Don't let the kiddie vibe fool you, this one's very tough.

KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL ★ OVERALL 09
Cute and cheerful platformer featuring the lovable glove-eared blue cat-rabbit hybrid. Fun stuff.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001 OVERALL 06
A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not a match for Rocky though.

KURI KURI MIX OVERALL 07
A blend of two-player co-operation and cutesy platformer. An odd but worthwhile addition to any PS2 collection.

LARGO WINCH OVERALL 05
Based on a French comic character, this spy game is too linear, and lacks the sort of interactivity that is needed to maintain a gamer's attention.

LEGIA 2: DUAL SAGA OVERALL 07
A Japanese RPG that uses a combat system full of combos and special moves. A host of mini-games help prevent this from falling into the 'generic' basket.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING OVERALL 05
'Violent ballet' with a shortage of modes and options. There are much better recreations of Pro wrestling.

LE MANS 24 HOURS ★ OVERALL 08
Accessible for the gamer who's daunted by sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills in abundance.



LMA MANAGER 2002

★ OVERALL 08

A-grade soccer management game, but for die-hard football fans only.

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

★ OVERALL 08

Superb hack and slash gaming based on the movie, not the book. Not very deep, but delivers huge battles with tons of things going on in them.

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

OVERALL 07

Arguably the best 2D fighter available on the PS2 thanks to its huge lineup of fifty-six playable characters and awesome 3-on-3 fights.

MADDEN NFL 2003

★ OVERALL 08

While realistic enough, of the two major NFL games around, this is the flashier. Best for those who'd rather see high scores than realism.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

★ OVERALL 08

Whilst impressive in many areas and exceptional in some, MHPB2 doesn't quite live up to expectations.

MAX PAYNE

★ OVERALL 08

A fine shooting game that is somewhat underrated by the general public. Fantastic innovations with the bullet time feature complete the game with a very cinematic feel.

MAXIMO

★ OVERALL 08

A tribute to *Ghosts 'N Goblins* and an excellent mix of retro and modern gaming, resulting in one of the strongest 3D platformers.

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

★ OVERALL 09

Originally a game on Dreamcast and PSone, this third-person action shooter in space has lost nothing in translation. Has three playable characters and is destined to be a cult classic.

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

★ OVERALL 09

A very realistic FPS that has been wowing audiences the world over since the game was released. This is a gripping, immersive game that should not be overlooked.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

★ OVERALL 10

A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage action game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, gripping story. Unbeatable sound and graphics – a benchmark for future PS2 titles.

MICROMACHINES

★ OVERALL 08

Nothing particularly 'next-gen' about this instalment of the series, but an excellent racing diversion nonetheless. Especially fun multiplayer.

MIDNIGHT CLUB

OVERALL 04

Speedy, urban racing, that boasts huge and action-packed New York and London environments. Sadly, the gameplay ain't that great.

MODERNGROOVE: MINISTRY OF SOUND

OVERALL 06

An entertaining lightshow generator, containing five full dance albums. Not quite up to the standards set by *MTV Music Generator*.

MONSTERS, INC.

OVERALL 04

Disney Platform game, based on the film. Initially amusing but sloppy and basic with a lifespan of no more than a few hours, though the film clips are entertaining.

MOTO GP

OVERALL 07

Gran Turismo on two wheels? Ish. A fantastic motorbike sim that rewards repeated play.

MOTO GP 2

OVERALL 07

A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race replay facility.

MOTOR MAYHEM

OVERALL 05

Unoriginal deathmatch-based vehicle blasting.

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR

★ OVERALL 09

Home DJ sample/mixer music maker. It's enormous fun and nigh-on faultless. This is exciting and well put together.

MX SUPERFLY 2003: FEAT RICKY CARMICHAEL

OVERALL 07

Polished and engaging motocross sim that utilises its subject matter to great effect. An excellent extreme game.

MX RIDER

OVERALL 06

Motocross/supercross sim that lacks the true grittiness and excitement of the sport.

NBA 2K3

★ OVERALL 09

Not only realistic, but feature packed as well, offering a wide selection of game modes, with everything from franchise through to street hoops.

NBA HOOPZ

OVERALL 06

Instant arcade-styled basketball sim but there are better ones on the street.

NBA LIVE 2002

OVERALL 06

An update of *NBA Live 2001*. Only for true basketball nuts.

PLATINUM WATCH

More news from Rockstar: its PS2 launch title *Midnight Club* joins the Platinum range just as we review the sequel on page 62. It's one of those cases where the sequel is better than the original though.

NBA STREET

OVERALL 06

Great looks, great to play, but not what most will want. There's room for improvement.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

★ OVERALL 08

One of the better arcade racers to grace the PS2. Truly the best of the NFS series, not just a PS2 update.

NFL 2K3

★ OVERALL 09

This is the game to own for anyone into American football thanks to its ultra-realistic graphics and gameplay.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB

★ OVERALL 08

American football game that has unique features, but unable to compete with *Madden 2003*.

NHL 2003

OVERALL 07

The definitive ice hockey videogame, but only a slight improvement on *NHL 2002*.

NHL HITZ 2002

OVERALL 06

A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style ice hockey game.

NY RACE

OVERALL 05

Average future taxi racer, based on the opening sequence of Luc Besson's sci-fi epic *The Fifth Element*. Nothing crazy to see here.

ONI

OVERALL 07

New character animation in an enjoyable 3rd person sci-fi romp.

ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

★ OVERALL 08

Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though.

OPERATION WINBACK

OVERALL 06

Lacks variety, but still an enjoyable stealth shooter, nevertheless.

ORPHEN

OVERALL 04

A disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG.

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

OVERALL 07

Rhythm action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY

OVERALL 05

Based on the race of the same name, this sim does little to inspire interest.

PENNY RACERS

OVERALL 04

A half-baked and underfed *GT3*, with just a few good tracks, it's a difficult one to recommend to anybody wanting a great racer.

POLICE 24/7

OVERALL 05

Basic cop-shot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-'em-up.

POOLMASTER

OVERALL 05

Dull pool sim, despite some tidy ball physics.

PORTAL RUNNER

OVERALL 05

Vikki, of *Army Men* notoriety, gets her own title. It's the best of a bad bunch.

PRISONER OF WAR

OVERALL 07

Escaping from POW camps is all well and good, but you remain a prisoner of often rigid game objectives. Even so, this is a bold, compelling adventure game.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2

★ OVERALL 09

For the second year running, the *Pro Evolution* series has been the best soccer-sim on any system. Lacks licences, but has total realism that fans of the beautiful game will appreciate.

PROJECT EDEN

★ OVERALL 08

Look beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose weeks to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure.

QUAKE III

★ OVERALL 08

In four-player, this FPS is the best multiplayer yet. A technical tour de force, it runs like greased lightning and looks absolutely gorgeous.

RATCHET & CLANK

★ OVERALL 09

Pure platforming bliss from the company behind the original *Spyro* the Dragon titles on the PSone. Loads of gadgets lend to new ideas.

RAYMAN REVOLUTION

★ OVERALL 08

Cartoon-quality graphics elevate this classic platformer starring a disjointed hero. A title worthy of PS2.

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

OVERALL 06

A decent offroad racing simulation that only really falls short in that it fails to match the wonders of *Colin McRae Rally 3* and *WRC II Extreme*.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

OVERALL 07

A marvellous, arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other.

RED FACTION

★ OVERALL 08

Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed *Quake III*. Marred only by some average level design.

REIGN OF FIRE

OVERALL 05

Packs plenty of action, but is chaotic to the point where it feels decidedly aimless. Also let down by control issues.

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

★ OVERALL 09

A captivating story, cinematic atmosphere, kinetic action, frights, thrills and copious amounts of blood-letting. Give in to its disgustingly depraved clutches.

REZ

★ OVERALL 09

Fight computer viruses from within the system. Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay. Unique, and refreshing.

RIDGE RACER V

OVERALL 07

A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality.

RING OF RED

★ OVERALL 08

A mech RTS that's fun? Oh yes. A must-buy for the discerning robo-fetishist after something different.

ROBOTEC: BATTLECRY

OVERALL 07

A cel-shaded shooter that brings the classic anime to life, but is held back by a decidedly clunky control system.

ROCKY

★ OVERALL 08

The best boxing title available for PS2. Has a great story mode that takes the player through the movies. Adrienne!

RUGBY

★ OVERALL 08

So far the only PS2 game to represent this sport. More akin to *Madden* than *FIFA* in approach, a highly enjoyable and refined take on the sport. EA Sports have done it again.

RUMBLE RACING

★ OVERALL 08

Fast and furious arcade stunt racer that has tonnes of challenge and replay value, especially in two-player mode. Full of totally insane courses to put you though you paces.

RUN LIKE HELL

OVERALL 07

A refreshing sci-fi survival horror title with a host of famous names handling the voice acting.

RUNE: VIKING WARLORD

OVERALL 04

A Viking slash-'em-up that should have been confined to the Dark Ages.

SALT LAKE 2002

OVERALL 03

Soulless Winter Olympics game. Decent weather effects but the majority of events are rather tedious.

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

★ OVERALL 08

Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot.

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

OVERALL 06

Basically *Tony Hawk's* on snow. It's an exhilarating sport, but the gameplay is unimaginative and the controls sluggish.

SILENT HILL 2

★ OVERALL 09

One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one relentless videogame.

SILENT SCOPE

★ OVERALL 08

Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game where you play a police sniper. Works surprisingly well, despite the lack of the sniper rifle from the arcade. A great launch title that we're still playing.

SILENT SCOPE 2

OVERALL 07

A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET

OVERALL 03

Tedious top-down shooter. No-one bought a PS2 for games like this.

SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2002

OVERALL 06

Adept footy management sim, but lacks the killer goal.

SKY ODYSSEY

★ OVERALL 08

A flight sim where you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.



SLED STORM	OVERALL 06
A maxed-out, splashy remake of the PSone racing classic, very much in the SSX mould.	
SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT	OVERALL 07
Deep & stylish this game suffers from disproportionate leaps in difficulty that can be off-putting.	
SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES	OVERALL 07
Impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.	
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: GOLD EDITION	OVERALL 05
No-brainer first-person shooter that's average at best. Only for those craving mindless violence.	
SOUL REAVER 2	OVERALL 07
Soul-sucking fantasy adventure that revolves around the exploits of Raziel and his huge Reaver sword.	
SPACE RACE	OVERALL 05
The cartoon Kart racer in its simplest form. Lacks originality and is a poor Mario Kart rip-off, but uses cel-shading to nice effect.	
SPIDER-MAN	OVERALL 07
It doesn't display huge innovations over its PSone counterpart, although it's a solid and enjoyable Spidey title either way.	
SPLASHDOWN	OVERALL 07
Above average Sea-Doo racer, with impressive water effects. The racing is sluggish, though.	
SPY HUNTER	* OVERALL 08
Pretend to be James Bond. Captures the spirit of the original game and adds further shiny next-gen knobs.	
SSX TRICKY	* OVERALL 09
Inventive rainbow coloured high speed snowboard game packed with crazy courses, and crazier characters.	
STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER	* OVERALL 09
Mesmerising 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects.	
STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING	OVERALL 05
Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.	
STATE OF EMERGENCY	OVERALL 06
A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot.	
STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE	OVERALL 04
File next to <i>Soldier of Fortune</i> in the poor PC port drawer. If it's sci-fi shooter thrills your after, you'd be better off to grab <i>Red Faction</i> on platinum instead, or something new like <i>TimeSplitters 2</i> or <i>007 Nightfire</i> .	
STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER	OVERALL 07
Gorgeous to look at, taking the gamer into the Star Wars universe, but is let down by repetitive gameplay.	
STREET FIGHTER EX3	OVERALL 06
A decent enough 2D/3D fighting game, but is milking the series to death. There are better 2D fighters from the same company.	
STREET HOOPS	OVERALL 06
More about collecting fancy duds than having a decent game of basketball, which is why this hoops title misses from the line.	
STUNTMAN	* OVERALL 08
Won't have the wide appeal of the driver games due to its difficulty, but it's an ingenious concept that thrills and entertains.	
SUMMONER 2	* OVERALL 08
Follow-up to the RPG launch title. More action orientated than the original, but still an epic adventure for fans of fantasy.	
SUPER TRUCKS	OVERALL 04
Bland, arcadey racing that fails to convey the impression of racing mammoth trucks.	
SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE	OVERALL 04
A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.	
SWING AWAY GOLF	OVERALL 03
Cutesy PSone golf sim that's let down by a poor PS2 conversion.	
TARZAN FREERIDE	OVERALL 04
Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work.	

TAZ: WANTED	OVERALL 05
Despite some neat cel-shading effects and amusing Looney Toons content, this platformer is a bit too bland to warrant attention.	
TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	* OVERALL 08
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves make it a worthwhile purchase, even with <i>Tekken 4</i> about.	
TEKKEN 4	* OVERALL 09
Continuing the tradition of fighting game excellence. The first <i>Tekken</i> game to include free-movement.	
TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN	OVERALL 06
A tidy but limited offroad racer, from the makers of <i>Smuggler's Run</i> .	
THE BOUNCER	OVERALL 06
A fun, accessible brawler whose adventuring elements are fairly limited.	
THE GETAWAY	* OVERALL 09
Sony's answer to <i>Grand Theft Auto</i> , with a decidedly darker and nastier storyline. Offers an amazingly life-like virtual replica of London, from the buildings through to the cars.	
THE HOOPS	* OVERALL 08
Strictly for gamers of pre-school age, this is a faithful and entertaining reproduction of the popular kids' show.	
THE MUMMY RETURNS	OVERALL 05
Sub-standard, adventure-based movie tie-in. You're better sticking to the more reliable <i>Tomb Raider</i> collection.	
THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE	OVERALL 06
It's <i>Crazy Taxi</i> but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.	
THE SUM OF ALL FEARS	OVERALL 05
A squad-based tactical first person shooter that is let down by horrendously bad AI and fiddly controls for ordering your grunts about.	
THE THING	* OVERALL 08
Not only does it do justice to the classic horror film, but also introduces fear and trust issues to the survival-horror genre.	
THE WEAKEST LINK	OVERALL 04
You'll get more enjoyment playing along with the show than you will from putting up with the viper-tongued host.	
THEME PARK WORLD	OVERALL 07
Take on the role of a theme park tycoon for a day in this engaging god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those turnstiles a-spinning is your prime directive.	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2003	OVERALL 07
Has an excellent one-two passing system and is a solid football title, but is still plays in the shadow of <i>Pro Evolution 2</i> and <i>FIFA 2003</i> .	
THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX	OVERALL 07
A brave attempt to blend arcade and sim with choppers.	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002	OVERALL 06
Authentic golf sim, a tad undermined by a random control system.	
TIME CRISIS 2	* OVERALL 08
PS2's first on-rails light gun title sets the standard for others to follow. Has a great two-player co-op mode.	
TIMESPLITTERS	* OVERALL 09
Fun, fast, frantic and inventive first-person shooter. Buy it for the addictive split-screen multiplayer madness.	
TIMESPLITTERS 2	* OVERALL 10
Takes the multiplayer mayhem from <i>TimeSplitters</i> and adds a tonne of options. Major visual improvements, i-Link for 16-player games, single-player map maker. The works!	
TOKYO XTREME RACER	OVERALL 04
A very limited and repetitive racer based on the Japanese road racing phenomenon.	
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3	* OVERALL 09
Fantastic skate sim that's perfect to play whether you've got two minutes or two hours to spare. Notable for being the first PAL game to have online network play, too.	
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	* OVERALL 10
Besides a couple new moves, <i>THPS4</i> takes the series in a refreshing new direction, allowing the player to skate around, interact with the locals, and do things at their own pace.	
TOP GUN	OVERALL 04
A flight sim that appears to have been designed by folks that have never seen a plane before.	

JURASSIC CLASSIC
Tekken Tag Tournament may be one of the dinosaurs of the PlayStation 2's gaming library, but its tag-team options give it an edge in multiplayer gaming that the newer *Tekken 4* can't lay claim to. An excellent platinum title to keep in mind if you're shopping for a fighting game. The latest is not always the greatest.

TREASURE PLANET	* OVERALL 08
An excellent take on the Disney movie of the same name, providing platform game goodness for younger gamers.	
TUROK: EVOLUTION	OVERALL 06
Boasts a wicked line-up of weapons and a variety of gaming styles, but suffers from crappy AI and frame rate issues.	
TWIN CALIBER	OVERALL 03
One of the shoddiest shooters around. Takes an interesting twin-pistol gaming concept and ruins it with slow gameplay, chronic control issues.	
TWISTED METAL: BLACK	* OVERALL 08
On a post-nuclear-war planet, it's time to drive around in frenzied vehicle-based hedonism. This is everything that you'd expect a <i>Twisted Metal</i> game to be on PS2 – and then some.	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	OVERALL 06
A very run of the mill soccer title which, with its very narrow focus on a single tournament, has extremely limited appeal. If you have <i>Pro Evolution</i> or <i>FIFA</i> , you don't need this.	
UFC THROWDOWN	OVERALL 07
Arguably the most realistic fighting game ever made, but extremely repetitive. One for fighting game nuts only.	
UNREAL TOURNAMENT	* OVERALL 08
A satisfyingly gory, totally over-the-top and immensely playable first-person shooter. Makes for a nice alternative to <i>Quake III</i> , but is outclassed totally by <i>TimeSplitters 2</i> .	
V8 SUPERCAR RACE DRIVER	* OVERALL 09
Real damage. Real V8s. Real Aussie tracks. Real fun. The best racing game seen so far on the PlayStation 2 with the best cars in the world. What's not to love?	
VICTORIOUS BOXERS	OVERALL 04
Offbeat Japanese boxing title that lacks the killer punch. Pointless to track down while games such as <i>Rocky</i> are about.	
VIRTUA COP ELITE	OVERALL 03
While this may deliver perfect conversions of the two arcade classics, there are far better light gun games available today, making this a bland experience.	
V-RALLY 3	* OVERALL 08
Not as instantly playable as <i>WRC II Extreme</i> or <i>Colin McRae Rally 3</i> but effort pays off with some very satisfying racing. It's head and shoulders above the majority of PS2 rally fare.	
VAMPIRE NIGHT	* OVERALL 09
A vampire-blasting light gun extravaganza that looks great but has questionable replay value once the bad boys are all put to rest. Again. Great for building bulging biceps, though.	
VIRTUA TENNIS 2	* OVERALL 08
Far and away the best Tennis simulation to grace the PS2. Besides featuring realistic and intuitive play, the World Circuit mode provides an awesome long term challenge.	
WACKY RACES STARRING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY	OVERALL 06
Misty-eyed fans of the TV series will love the visuals. A shame the game isn't all that great, although it beats some of the cartoon based racing games around.	
WILD WILD RACING	OVERALL 06
Off-road buggy-racing game with initially discouraging handling. Stick with it, though, and the Stunt mode can become quite addictive.	
WIPEOUT FUSION	* OVERALL 09
Style and substance are here in the most fully realised <i>Wipeout</i> yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it gets. Comes complete with a top soundtrack full of big name electronica artists.	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002	* OVERALL 08
Extremely playable snooker sim that may convert sceptics. Take part in the all-star tournament playing as Hendry or Doherty.	
WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS	OVERALL 07
Arcade tank sim that's brilliant in Four-player Deathmatch mode. Lacks lasting appeal in single-player mode, though.	
WORMS BLAST	OVERALL 06
A Tetris-like departure from the usual <i>Worms</i> fare, but one that lacks depth. Fans of the <i>Worms</i> games be aware this is more like <i>Bust-A-Move</i> than what you're used to.	
WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS	OVERALL 07
An amusing mission-based driving game that features excellent collision effects, with cars that be broken down piece by piece.	
WRC II EXTREME	* OVERALL 09
Don't let the 'extreme' title fool you, this is pure rally realism. Not as pretty as <i>Colin McRae Rally 3</i> , but has all the official tracks and cars which will make a difference to fans of the sport.	
WWE SMACKDOWN 4: 'SHUT YOUR MOUTH'	* OVERALL 08
This is without a doubt the most realistic representation of the WWE experience on a console yet. All the crazy antics outside the ring are included for a laugh too. Top stuff.	
ZONE OF THE ENDERS	* OVERALL 09
Cool mech thriller, with bonus MGS2 demo just to get you in the mood. Absolutely brilliant for anime fans who want to see high-speed mech combat.	

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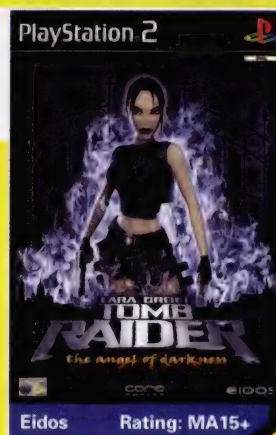
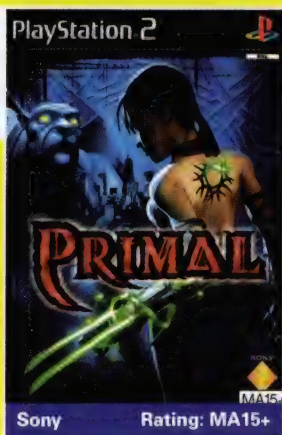
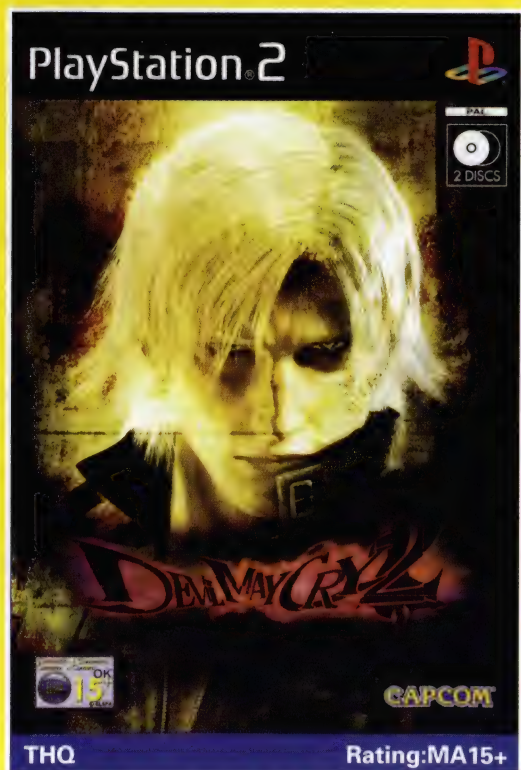
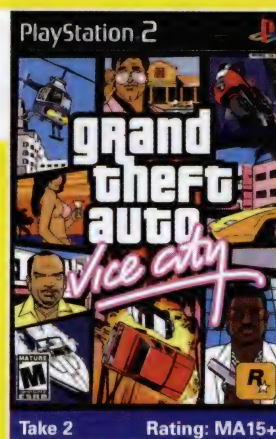
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HAIL TO THE KING

INSPIRED BY the awesome adventure movies of *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns*, *The Scorpion King* tells the action-packed tale of Mathayus, a legendary warrior pitted against the unstoppable forces of the evil overlord Memnon, back before he became a giant arachnid. Mathayus is played by WWE wrestling sensation, 'The Rock', for his first major starring role in a feature film.

To celebrate the release of *The Scorpion King* on DVD and the PlayStation 2 game – *The Scorpion King: Rise of an Akkadian*, Vivendi Universal have given OPS2 five packs to give to our readers, providing the complete *Scorpion King* experience with both the DVD and the game!

■ To give yourself a shot at picking up this complete *Scorpion King* package, answer the following simple question: What is the real name of the 'The Rock'? Just follow the comp entry details at the bottom of the page, marking your entries to "Hail to the King"

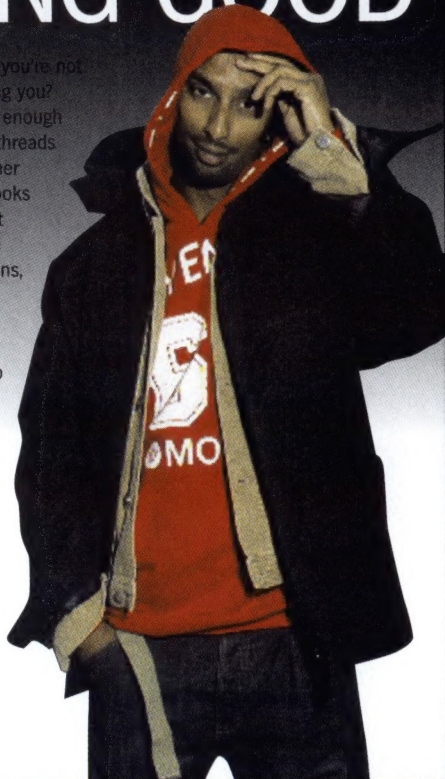


MOOKING GOOD DONE FOR FREE

GOT THE GAMING bug so bad that you're not leaving the home and mum's dressing you? Or are you simply fashion conscious enough to not be able to pass a cool set of threads without reaching for your wallet? Either way, our generous friends over at Mooks clothing have put together an instant wardrobe for one lucky reader to the value of \$500, including a jacket, jeans, t-shirt, cap and optics.

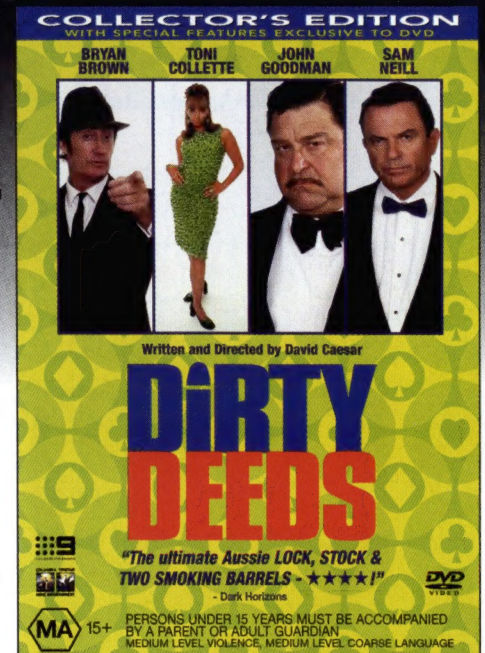
■ To dress up dapper like this handsome chap here, head on over to www.mooks.com take a flight to Melbourne and see if you can tell us what rolls into the back of your seat (that'll make more sense once you head to the site). Follow the comp entry details at the bottom of the page and mark your entries to "Mooking Good"

Mooks.



Deeds is our answer to *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. Set in Kings Cross in the '60s, Bryan Brown plays a mobster looking to control all the slot machines in town. Then the American Mafia decided they want a piece of the action, and things go pear shaped in an exciting way. Arguably the best Aussie film of 2002. OPS2 and Columbia Tri Star have gotten together to provide five readers with a copy of this excellent film on DVD!

■ To be in the running for a copy of *Dirty Deeds*, just mail in and name four Australian actors that star in the film. Follow the comp entry details at the bottom of the page and mark your entries to "Done For Free"



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with the name of the competition in the subject line or alternatively, send envelopes via snail mail to: Official PlayStation Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022. E-mail entrants are entitled to one e-mail per competition only.

Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the comp, your name, age, phone number and address. All competitions close February 19, 2003.

Note: Images of prizes as shown above may vary from the appearance of the actual prizes received due to circumstances out of the publisher's control.

DANTE'S INFERNO!

OPS2 GIVE YOU AN AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE WITH THE FIRST REVIEW OF CAPCOM'S GRIPPING GOTHIC ACTION GAME - DEVIL MAY CRY 2.

NEXT MONTH
IN OFFICIAL
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THE SIMS

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CHECK OUT THE FIRST OF OUR TWO-PART GUIDE TO VICE CITY. TIPS, TACTICS, MISSION GUIDES & MORE!

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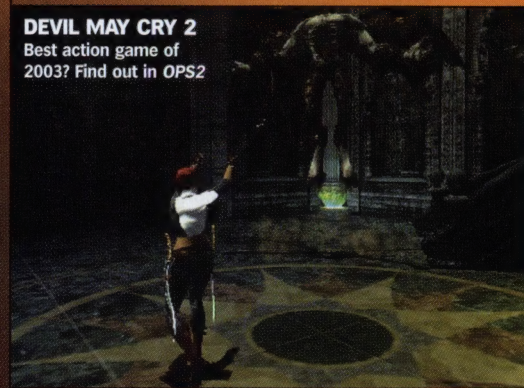
COMPLETE YOUR AUDIO GAMING EXPERIENCE WITH OUR GUIDE TO THE BEST SURROUND SOUND SYSTEMS TO USE WITH YOUR PLAYSTATION 2.

DELICIOUS DEMO DISC

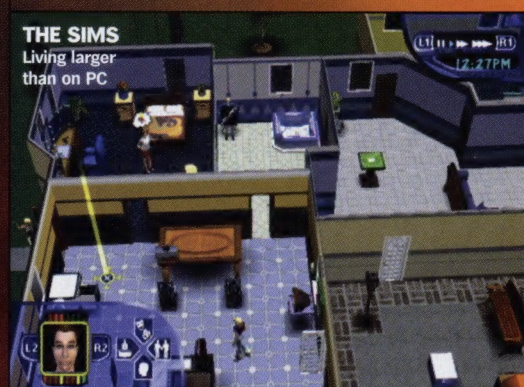
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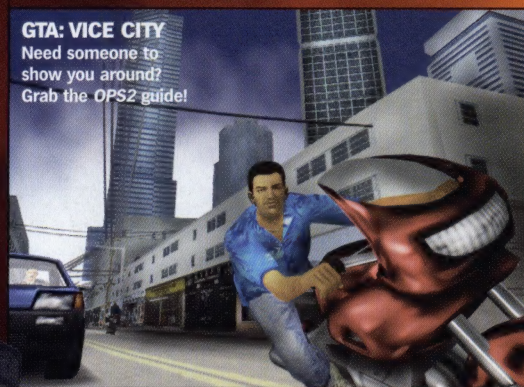
DEVIL MAY CRY 2
Best action game of
2003? Find out in OPS2



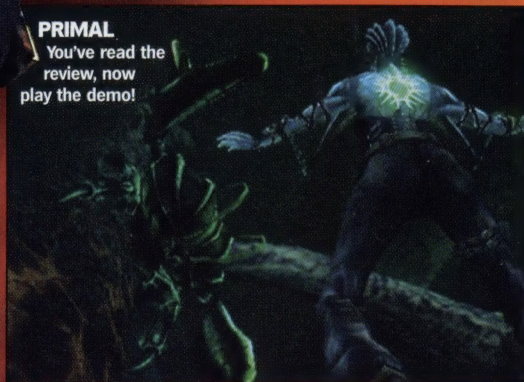
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Living larger
than on PC



GTA: VICE CITY
Need someone to
show you around?
Grab the OPS2 guide!



PRIMAL
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review, now
play the demo!





the **Getaway**

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Production Design SIMON WOOD Written by BRENDAN McNAMARA and KATIE ELLWOOD Original Score ANDREW HALE Game Design CHUN WAH KONG Directed by BRENDAN McNAMARA

www.thegetaway.co.uk



PlayStation 2
THE THIRD PLACE

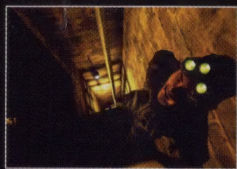
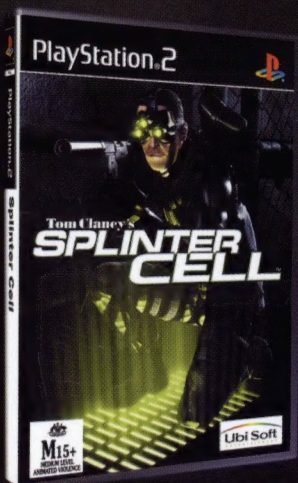


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PlayStation 2



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